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ABSTRACT

This document reports on the purpose, design, implementation, and outcomes of a policy forum entitled "Training Educators To Work with Students Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired." Participants included representatives of universities, public schools, schools for the blind, organizations that work with this population, state departments of education, Regional Resource Centers, parent organizations, and the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs. Discussions at the policy forum focused on issues related to preservice and inservice training for staff, especially ways in which training programs could be supported and strengthened. Preliminary action plans to address needs in these areas at the local, state, and federal/national levels were developed. Most of the document consists of four appendices: (1) a list of forum participants; (2) background materials for the policy forum; (3) forum handouts; and (4) the forum agenda. The background materials include the following articles: "Low-Incidence Special Education Teacher Preparation: A Supply and Capacity Pilot Study" (Mack L. Bowen and Patricia H. Klass); "The National Agenda for the Education of Children and Youths with Visual Impairments, Including Those with Multiple Disabilities" (Anne L. Corn et al.); "Higher Education Programs for Personnel Preparation in Visual Impairments/Blindness in the United States"; and "Teacher Educators and the Future of Personnel Preparation Programs for Serving Students with Visual Impairments" (R. K. Silberman et al.). Forum handouts include "What We Know about Teacher Preparation Programs in Blindness and Visual Impairments" (Anne Corn et al.) and "A Paradigm Shift in Staff Development" (Dennis Sparks). (Individual background materials contain references.) (DB)

ED 404 820

POLICY FORUM REPORT:

TRAINING EDUCATORS TO WORK WITH STUDENTS WHO ARE BLIND OR VISUALLY IMPAIRED

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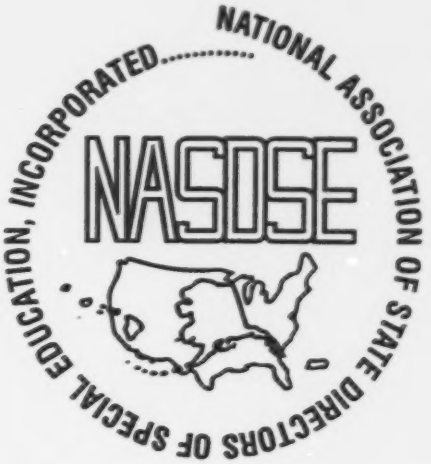

Convened on September 18-20, 1996
at the
Grand Hyatt Hotel

Final Report
Year 4 Deliverable #9-4-1
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Prepared for:
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Project FORUM at the National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE) is a contract funded by the Office of Special Education Programs of the U. S. Department of Education. The project carries out a variety of activities that provide information needed for program improvement, and promote the utilization of research data and other information for improving outcomes for students with disabilities. The project also provides technical assistance and information on emerging issues, and convenes small work groups to gather expert input, obtain feedback, and develop conceptual frameworks related to critical topics in special education.

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ABSTRACT

This document reports on the purpose, design, implementation and outcomes of a policy forum entitled *Training Educators to Work with Students Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired* held at The Grand Hyatt Hotel in Washington, D.C. on September 18-29, 1996. Participants included representatives of universities, public schools, schools for the blind, organizations that work with this population, state departments of education, Regional Resource Centers, parent organizations, and the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). Discussion at the policy forum focused on issues related to preservice and inservice training for staff who work with students who are blind or visually impaired, especially ways in which training programs could be supported and strengthened. Preliminary action plans to address needs in these areas were developed.

TRAINING EDUCATORS TO WORK WITH STUDENTS WHO ARE BLIND OR VISUALLY IMPAIRED: A POLICY FORUM

Purpose and Organization of the Policy Forum

Background and Purpose

In the spring of the 1996, while preliminary discussions were taking place at the federal level about the regionalization of the preservice training for educators of the blind and visually impaired, the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) was made aware of increasing concerns in the university community about personnel preparation in this disability area. Three of these concerns include the scarcity of teachers and instructors for students with visual impairments regardless of primary disability (Bowen & Klass, 1993; Wiener & Joffee, 1993), the reduction in number of tenure-track faculty in this disability area over the past decade (Pierce, Smith, & Clarke, 1992; Silberman, Corn, & Sowell., 1996), and the closure of teacher-training programs in the area of visual impairments (Silberman et al., 1996).

There are conflicting sets of data on the incidence of visual impairments. According to the 17th Annual Report to Congress (ARC), an estimated .04 percent (four hundredths of one percent) of the student population, age 6-21, are served under the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), Part B, and Chapter 1 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) with a disability classification of *visual impairment* (1993-94 school year). However, Silberman et al. (1996) point out that students with visual impairments are often not identified in official counts because of wide variations in data systems and state regulations that require that students be listed by their primary disability (frequently mental retardation). According to the American Printing House (APH) for the Blind (1994), federal counts include less than half of the students with visual impairments who are counted in the Federal Quota Registration maintained by that organization. But the APH count includes only students who are *legally blind*, which still excludes some students with lesser visual impairments who are in need of special educational services. Benson & Marano (1994) set the prevalence rate of visual impairments as high as one percent of the student population.

Since decisions regarding personnel supply and demand are often based on child count data, inaccurate numbers further complicate the issues surrounding the training of educators to work with students who are blind and visually impaired. In response to the gravity of these issues and the need for input from the field regarding regionalized training, OSEP called upon Project FORUM at the National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE) to hold a policy forum on this topic. The purpose of holding this forum was to bring together a diverse group of stakeholders to discuss the critical issues related to training educators to work with students who are blind or visually impaired. The goals of the policy forum were:

- To specify the essential components and structural elements of a good preservice program for educators
- To identify effective methods for inservice training of educators
- To identify successful strategies for addressing personnel shortages in the field
- To develop an action plan which builds on this policy forum

Preparation for the Policy Forum

Selection of Participants

Project FORUM and OSEP staff worked closely with university faculty representatives to select participants who would represent different perspectives on the issue of training educators to work with students who are blind or visually impaired. Participants were selected who had experience with both preservice and inservice training of teachers and orientation and mobility (O&M) specialists. Invited participants included state directors of special education, other state education agency staff concerned with low incidence populations, university faculty, a university dean, representatives from national organizations and consumer groups, officials from schools for the blind, a parent representative, a service provider, a Regional Resource Center representative, a staff member from the Networking System for Training Education Personnel (NSTEP) Project at NASDSE, and OSEP staff. The list of participants can be found in Appendix A.

Background Materials

All participants received the following materials (contained in Appendix B of this report) prior to the policy forum:

Bowen, M.L. & Klass, P. H. (1993). Low-incidence special education teacher preparation: A supply and capacity pilot study. *Teacher Education and Special Education, 16(3),* 248-257.

Corn, A.L., Hatlen, P., Huebner, K.M., Ryan, F., & Siller, M. A. (1995). *The National Agenda for the Education of Children and Youths with Visual Impairments, Including Those with Multiple Impairments.* New York, NY: American Foundation for the Blind.

National Clearinghouse for Professions in Special Education. (May 1996). *Higher Education Programs for Personnel Preparation in Visual Impairments/Blindness in the United States.* Reston, VA: Author.

Silberman, R.K., Corn, A.L., & Sowell, V.M. (1996). Teacher educators and the future of personnel preparation programs for serving students with visual impairments. *Journal of Visual Impairment and Blindness, March-April 1996*, 115-124.

Logistical Details

The policy forum was held at the Grand Hyatt Hotel in Washington, DC on Wednesday evening, September 18th, Thursday, September 19th, and Friday morning, September 20th.

Process of the Meeting

The opening session of the policy forum was held on Wednesday evening. Following dinner, Lou Danielson, Director of OSEP's Division of Innovation and Development, and Eileen Ahearn, Director of Project FORUM, welcomed the participants. Project FORUM staff also reviewed the meeting goals and agenda, provided information about logistical and reimbursement procedures, and introduced the meeting facilitator, Doin Hicks. The remainder of the evening was dedicated to participants' self introductions and a sharing of perspectives on this topic.

Thursday morning began with an overview of the state of *preservice training* in this disability area, presented by Anne Corn, Kay Ferrell and George Zimmerman. Overheads and handouts used for this presentation can be found in Appendix C. Following the presentation, the total group reacted to their data and discussed other issues related to preservice training. After a break, there were two small-group discussions on preservice training--one group focusing on state and local roles, and the other group focusing on the roles of institutions of higher education (IHE) and the federal government. Each small group reported back to the larger group before the meeting was adjourned for a lunch break.

The afternoon session was launched by three short presentations on *inservice training*. Pat Gonzalez provided the group with review of current thinking in the staff development arena, Mike Valentine discussed the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) and how West Virginia has addressed CSPD requirements, and Mike Bina provided a state school for the blind perspective. Handouts from these presentations can be found in Appendix C. Following the presentations, the participants opted to continue discussing inservice training in a larger group, rather than break into smaller groups as indicated on the agenda.

On Friday morning, the final session of the policy forum, participants were presented with a Worksheet for Action Plan. The discussion built upon that worksheet and covered issues that participants felt needed clarification from the previous day. Tom Hehir, Director of the OSEP, was in attendance for a portion of this final session, and participated in the discussion.

The agenda included in the meeting packet can be found in Appendix D; however, please note that the process of the meeting described above varied somewhat from the agenda that was distributed at the outset of the policy forum.

Summary of Discussion - Preservice Training

- The ***IDEA child count*** for students with visual disabilities is a significant undercount of the actual incidence of visual impairment (VI). Discrepancies appear to be the result of counting students in only one disability area. Often students with VI have other disabilities (e.g., mental retardation) and, therefore, will be counted in another disability area. Data from other sources indicate that the discrepancy between the *real count* and the *official child count* may be increasing. Because of the fact that child count data are the basis for making critical personnel decisions, there is an urgent need to get consensus on how student data should be collected. There was discussion about a national registry on VI similar to the one Gallaudet has on hearing impaired students. Concern was expressed about how the reduction in data collection activities, that seems likely to be included in a reauthorized IDEA, would impact the VI child count.

- The ***number of preservice training programs*** is inadequate, and consequently the number of trained teachers for the VI and O&M specialists is insufficient. There are currently only 26 programs in 19 states that meet the American Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER) standard of one full time equivalent (FTE) faculty member per program. Some reports include university programs that do not meet this minimum standard. A total of 14 programs have been closed since 1980, and five other programs are now in jeopardy. In that time period, only one new program has opened and remained open. Cost and changing university priorities were among the factors cited for the reduction in training programs.

- The ***lack of national standards for certification*** compromises the quality of preservice training in the area of VI. The Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER) - Division 17 has issued standards, but these have not been adopted by the states. One suggestion was that the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC) be contacted regarding this matter. There was discussion as to whether OSEP should fund programs that do not meet national certification standards.

- A number of ***faculty-related concerns*** were also discussed in regard to program quality, such as the increasing number of courses being taught by adjunct staff rather than university faculty. When tenure-track faculty leave, too often they are not replaced, partly because it is difficult to find doctoral level applicants for these positions. Quality may be compromised because existing faculty are required to spend time recruiting students for VI training programs, and are being given more responsibilities outside the VI programs. With more responsibilities and fewer faculty, less research is being done in the field of VI.

- There is a ***lack of good clinical supervision and mentoring*** in some places, although the National Commission for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) requires mentoring the first year after graduation. Supervision is particularly a challenge when training programs are far from practicum sites, which is often the case. A related issue is that not all teacher training programs provide certification in O&M, and some dual certification programs are separately housed, hindering needed coordination.

- ***University training programs face a variety of financial challenges*** due to budget constraints. Tuition payments do not cover the actual cost of instruction, and, with the trend towards offering in-state tuition to students who live in states without training programs, covering costs is becoming more difficult for universities. Schools of education are being forced to consider offering a few larger programs, rather than many smaller ones. This is when state and regional planning is essential. Only 16 of the 26 university training programs receive funding from the U.S. Office of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). Participants stressed the need for federal support of faculty (programs) and students (stipends).

- ***Changes are necessary in the nature of preservice training*** due to the number of *non-traditional* students entering training programs, and the paucity of educators in rural and urban districts. For example, for an increasing number of students, VI-program entry represents a career change, and/or students may be working full or part time. There is a great need for teachers of the VI and O&M specialists in urban and rural areas; however, there are no university training programs within easy access for potential students who live in these areas. Some solutions discussed include distance education, summer-only programs, and tuition support for students willing to make a future commitment to work in a high-need district.

- ***Measuring the effectiveness*** of preservice training programs is a critical activity and frequently overlooked. There is also little research and published information on effective preservice training methods for educators in the field of VI (e.g., distance learning).

- ***Federally-funded regional training programs*** or "centers of excellence" may be a viable solution to many of the problems with preservice training for VI. Regional centers would bring together faculty who now work in isolation. However, creating such centers leaves some problems unsolved and creates others. The entire process of funding regional centers would require national and regional collaboration/cooperation of an unprecedented nature. Perhaps the federally-funded Regional Resource Centers (RRCs) could assist with this process. Even defining a *region* could be a controversial matter. (RRC regions could be used.) There are questions about whether universities would have the confidence to build up training programs and hire high quality faculty with "soft money." Also, would individual faculty be *rewarded* for their involvement in these centers? (i.e., Would time-consuming region-wide supervision substitute for published research?) There are also the

questions of how tuition would be set, and whether centers would specialize (e.g., technology, literacy).

- ***Parent/family demand*** for more and better qualified educators for students with VI has been minimal for a variety of reasons, and levels of advocacy differ greatly across the country. One possible explanation for the minimal demand is the low incidence of this disability, and parents of students with VI are isolated from each other. Also, many parents are not aware of the services to which their children are entitled (e.g., O&M) or, in the case of a student with multiple disabilities, the visual impairment may be the least of the parents' concerns. Perhaps parent input on the nature and adequacy of VI services should be sought in a structured manner (e.g., federally-funded study). Increased parent advocacy is needed to stimulate change.

- ***Reciprocity across states*** in the area of teacher and O&M specialist certification must be a goal. The current lack of reciprocity creates many challenges for training programs and graduating students. It was suggested that teacher and O&M specialist shortages are much increased because of certification barriers. A common core curriculum in the area of VI would streamline the process of training and hiring qualified service providers, and could facilitate interstate reciprocity in certification. Limiting federal support to training programs that meet national standards and promote reciprocity was discussed. The success of the American Speech and Hearing Association (ASHA) in implementing national standards was cited and there was interest in conferring with that association.

Summary of Discussion - Inservice Training

- ***Accurate child count data is necessary*** for making decisions related to inservice training. Without accurate data, the need for inservice training in this area may not be given the priority it deserves. As mentioned previously, the IDEA child count for students with visual disabilities is considered to be a significant undercount of the actual incidence of VI. This is probably due to the fact that students with VI are typically counted only once, usually in their major disability area, which typically is not VI. One participant suggested that the Instructional Materials Centers, located in almost every state, keep track of every student with VI goals on his/her Individual Education Plan (IEP). This could be a valuable source of child count data.

- ***Inservice training in the area of VI is currently inadequate*** both in regard to completing the fundamental preparation that cannot be entirely met in the preservice training programs, and providing the necessary ongoing support and expansion of knowledge and skills for staff working in the field. The reasons for this inadequacy are many, but include low incidence of the disability (i.e., few staff need training in VI), and lack of resources for inservice training. The question of whether the federal government should provide more financial

support for inservice training was discussed, particularly in light of the fact that the federal government invests substantial funds in preservice training.

- The ***provision of inservice training is changing***, with more emphasis on using needs assessment information, and less emphasis on providing "one-shot sessions." Refresher courses are popular in some states, as is the "trainer of trainers" model that is effective when practitioners are spread out over a whole state rather than in a few schools. Mentoring/coaching is being used in some districts, although not necessarily in the area of VI. Local staff with particular expertise are also being used as low cost trainers. One important consideration in the provision of training is that many practitioners cannot easily leave home to travel to inservice opportunities. This is a problem because teachers of the VI and O&M specialists are typically isolated from each other due to the low incidence of the disability. Often service providers who work with the VI in neighboring counties have not even met each other.

- ***Professional meetings, conferences, and exhibits*** provide valuable inservice training opportunities for teachers of the VI and O&M specialists. However, these events are attended by far too few practitioners. The expectation in many districts is that practitioners should cover the cost of these events, if they are granted time off from their schools at all. Perhaps this expectation should change and inservice monies should be made available for this type of inservice training.

- ***A national inservice training model*** may be one way to improve the dissemination of research findings and insure a more consistent quality of educators. Translating research into practice is of critical importance, but is currently ineffective and often takes 20 years. Higher education and the federal government should play a role in facilitating this process. However, a national model may not be responsive to the diverse inservice training needs across the country. For example, in some schools and districts, very basic information about visual impairments is needed.

- ***SEAs can no longer provide inservice training*** at the level they could in the past because of limited funds and downsizing of departments. Other resources must be tapped in the future, such as schools for the blind, higher education, parent groups, and advocacy organizations. However, SEAs should continue to provide leadership in this area because administrators at the local level may be in need of inservice as much as the practitioners. SEA staff can play a valuable role by providing lists of available resources in the area of VI, forwarding announcements about conferences, supporting parent participation in inservice activities, and coordinating regional inservice training with higher education.

- ***Measuring the effectiveness*** of inservice training is an important, but widely neglected activity. There is also little research or published information on effective inservice methods for educators in the field of VI. It is literally impossible at this time to answer the question,

"How effective is the new technology of distance learning for educators of students with VI?"

- The ***role and participation of the schools for the blind*** could be expanded. Staff at schools for the blind are excellent resources for the state and local education agencies in regard to inservice training. For example, in Missouri, the School for the Blind has sponsored "Weekend with the Experts" and covered such topics as transition and socialization. On the other hand, staff development needs at schools for the blind should be considered when planning state-wide training in the area of VI.

Summary of Discussion - Other Topics

Although the discussion at this policy forum focused mainly on preservice and inservice training issues, the following related issues emerged over the course of the policy forum.

- Research in the area of VI (not just related to training) is critical and should involve schools for the blind, as well as other practitioners in the field. Federal support for such research is necessary.

- Recruitment and retention of teachers from diverse racial, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds for students with VI is important.

- Interchange with other low incidence disability advocates and teacher trainers was mentioned as a way to increase the knowledge base on a variety of issues (e.g., child count, preservice and inservice training, recruitment and retention).

Preliminary Action Plans

Local Level - Preservice

Action Needed	*Steps to be Taken*
1. Improve the quality of programs for the VI.	1a. Use national standards to set up and run programs (AER-Division 17 Standards). 1b. Get national standards into the hands of "grass roots' constituents. 1c. Solicit input from parents and community members.
2. Support preservice training in the area of VI.	2a. Provide release time and other incentives to get both teachers of the VI and O&M specialists trained.
3. Coordinate with providers of preservice training.	3a. Establish closer working relationships with schools for the blind, professional organizations, and other LEAs.

State Level - Preservice

Action Needed	*Steps to be Taken*
1. Conduct accurate assessment of services needed by students with VI in the state.	1a. Revise method used for child count to accurately identify all students who need VI services, regardless of primary disability.
2. Facilitate reciprocity among states in regard to certification and endorsements in the area of VI.	2a. Establish interstate agreements for certification and endorsement of teachers of the VI and O&M specialists. 2b. Take a stronger stand on national standards for VI programs.
3. Foster a regional approach to problem solving for VI services.	3a. Meet with in-state IHEs to emphasize the necessity of supporting regional training programs and collaborating on training efforts (e.g., grant writing). 3b. Work with IHEs to establish a "common core" undergraduate curriculum that is accepted across states. 3c. Facilitate the development of state legislation and regulatory measures that support a regional approach. 3d. Involve historically Black colleges and universities in regional efforts.
4. Improve the quality of VI programs.	4a. Adopt national certification standards (AER-Division 17 Standards). 4b. Recognize the necessity of O&M skills and certification as part of VI training. 4c. Evaluate the effectiveness of training programs, particularly those using new technologies. 4d. Facilitate the availability of practicum experiences as part of preservice training. 4e. Solicit input from parents and community groups.
5. Reduce shortages of teachers of the VI and O&M specialists.	5a. Contribute to the cost of out-of-state tuition when no in-state training is available.

IHE Level - Preservice

Action Needed	*Steps to be Taken*
1. Improve the quality of VI programs.	1a. Create dual certification programs. 1b. Adopt national standards (AER - Division 17). 1c. Evaluate training models. 1d. Participate in discussions on Goal 3 of the National Agenda. 1e. Provide practical experience for students in training. 1f. Collaborate with schools for the blind.
2. Explore the concept of regional training centers for VI.	2a. Build relationships with other IHEs and work collaboratively on regional approaches. 2b. Respond to federal requests for information on viable regional training models.
3. Connect students to professional associations.	3a. Introduce students to national and state professional organizations and encourage them to join/participate.

Federal & National Level - Preservice

Action Needed	*Steps to be Taken*
1. Provide direction on accurate identification of VI preservice training needs.	1a. Obtain consensus on which set of data will be used to estimate number of students who need VI services. 1b. Establish a national registry on the incidence of VI. 1c. Provide guidance to states on the accurate collection of data on current preservice training capacity relative to data-based needs assessment. 1d. Review proposed changes in data collection requirements as part of the reauthorized IDEA for impact on accurate VI data. 1e. Target VI during federal compliance monitoring to assess the extent to which service needs of the VI are being met with current staff.
2. Conduct careful planning at the federal level in regard to regional training programs.	2a. Confer with key stakeholders regarding regional centers and insure that states are involved. 2b. Issue planning grants to stimulate regional planning. 2c. Support RRC efforts to work with states on the issue of regional centers. 2d. Conduct peer review on all matters related to funding regional centers.
3. Reconsider the federal policy for funding VI preservice training programs.	3a. Work with current training programs to review funding policy.

4. Support high quality VI programs.	4a. Provide federal resources for translating research into practice. 4b. Support research in the area of VI. 4c. Support doctoral-level training in order to sustain preservice programs. 4d. Encourage the adoption of national standards for certification. 4e. Disseminate key sections of the National Agenda through national groups/associations.
5. Decrease isolation of VI preservice training programs.	5a. Establish and maintain on-going exchange of information among preservice training programs.

Local Level - Inservice

Action Needed	*Steps to be Taken*
1. Obtain accurate data on students with VI to determine inservice needs.	1a. Submit data to state vision consultants on the number of students with VI, regardless of major disability.
2. Translate research into classroom practice.	2a. Grant release time and financial support for teachers of the VI and O&M specialists to attend professional association events and national conferences. 2b. Provide opportunities for educators of the VI to access up-to-date information and communicate with their colleagues via the internet.
3. Educate LEA special education directors about the needs of students with VI.	3a. Disseminate information about the needs of students with VI to LEA special education directors.

4. Guard against "burn-out" and feelings of isolation on the part of educators who work with the VI.	4a. Provide opportunities for educators of the VI to communicate with colleagues via the internet and at conferences. 4b. Offer mentoring opportunities in the area of VI to teachers at all levels.

State Level - Inservice

Action Needed	*Steps to be Taken*
1. Obtain accurate data on students with VI.	1a. Revise child count methods to accurately reflect all students who need VI services, regardless of major disability.
2. Coordinate inservice information for LEAs.	2a. Designate a contact person at the SEA for VI inservice training issues. 2b. Disseminate information about available course offerings, resources, and alternative strategies for inservice in the area of VI.
3. Educate SEA staff about needs in the area of VI.	3a. Include staff knowledgeable about VI issues on broad educational policy committees (special or general education) in order to keep VI issues in the forefront. 3b. Attend national meetings and forums on VI issues.
4. Assure high quality inservice in the area of VI.	4a. Conduct statewide needs assessment. 4b. Facilitate a regional/multi-county approach to inservice. 4c. Help districts evaluate models of inservice and disseminate information about effectiveness.

IHE Level - Inservice

Action Needed	*Steps to be Taken*
1. Support high quality inservice in the area of VI.	1a. Assist with the evaluation of inservice training programs at the local level. 1b. Coordinate preservice and inservice training efforts.

Federal Level - Inservice

Action Needed	*Steps to be Taken*
1. Support high quality inservice in the area of VI.	1a. Provide grants for developing and evaluating models of inservice.

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APPENDIX A

Participant List

Training Educators to Work with Students Who are Blind or Visually Impaired:
A Policy Forum
Washington, DC - September 18-20, 1996
Participant List

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APPENDIX B

Policy Forum Background Materials

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Low-Incidence Special Education Teacher Preparation: A Supply and Capacity Pilot Study

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ABSTRACT: *This study was designed to obtain information on special education teacher preparation practices, including program capacity and projections of future program graduates, from institutions of higher education. A pilot survey instrument, "Personnel Preparation Program Supply and Capacity Survey," was developed and sent to a target population of low-incidence area special education teacher preparation programs. Low-incidence program areas were chosen as a smaller subset of the larger field of special education training programs due to the paucity of teacher supply data in these areas. Survey questions were clustered under six topics closely related to the supply of new teaching personnel. The topics included were (a) institutional program information, including present and projected number of graduates, (b) certification practices, (c) student recruitment and retention, (d) program capacity, (e) graduate follow-up, and (f) supply/demand projections. Findings are presented and discussed with implications for national practice.*

WHAT IS THE CAPACITY of the nation's colleges and universities to prepare special education teachers and related services personnel? Few concrete, nationally reported data are available concerning the capacity of institutions of higher education to train teachers who are certified in the various disability areas. Related concerns of teacher shortage, attrition, and supply tend to obfuscate the measurement of capacity. Additionally, state and national needs for enhanced knowledge of training program characteristics, certification practices, student recruitment and retention, and graduate follow-up have been expressed.

Background

The personnel concept most closely related to capacity is the new supply of personnel being prepared to enter the job market. A major although inadequate measure of teacher supply is the number of degrees conferred during a given period of time. The national repository for this information is the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), formerly known as the Higher Education General Information Survey (HEGIS), maintained by the National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education. In a 10-year review of HEGIS data on special education degree awards (1975–76 to 1984–85), Bowen (1987) found a consistent drop of 500 to 1,000 special education teachers being graduated per year from 1976 to 1985. Thus the total number of degrees awarded in special education appears to be dropping rapidly. The deteriorating situation in training capacity has been further described by Boe (1990), who reported that the number of bachelor's and master's special education graduates declined from 23,000 in 1983–84 to 16,000 in 1987–88, a 30.43% loss.

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Concern for the reported shortage of qualified personnel in special education and related services has been reflected in both the 1986 Amendments of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (P.L. 99-457) and the 1990 Amendments of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (P.L. 101-476). Both require that in making grants to prepare personnel in special education, the U. S. Department of Education must base the determination of training awards on information related to the present and projected need for personnel to be trained based on identified state, regional, or national shortages and the capacity of institutions and agencies to train qualified personnel. Although the merits of having data available on the present and projected need for special education personnel and the capacity of institutions to produce these personnel are obvious, significant gaps occur in both state and national knowledge about these issues. There are well documented discussions concerning the lack of specific, accurate, national data on the numbers of special education teachers available, the number of teachers in preparation, and other factors affecting teacher availability (Bowen, Butler, Jones, Bresco, & Huang, 1991; Geiger, 1989; Haggstrom, Darling-Hammond, & Grissmer, 1988; Lauritzen, 1990; McLaughlin, Smith-Davis, & Burke, 1986; Smull & Bunsen, 1989).

To obtain a more accurate indication of training program characteristics and capacity, areas of training, and number of teachers who will be prepared in the near future, programmatic information and data from individual institutional training programs and state education agencies are needed. Therefore, the purposes of this study were (a) to develop a pilot survey instrument and (b) to survey a population of special education teacher preparation programs on certain topics closely related to the supply of new teaching personnel. The topics chosen for this investigation were (a) institutional program information, including present and projected number of graduates; (b) certification practices; (c) recruitment and retention; (d) program capacity; (e) graduate follow up; and (f) supply/demand projections. These topics were investigated in the present study and are reported here.

Method

Subjects

The target group of institutions identified to receive the survey comprised special education personnel preparation programs that offer teacher preparation/certification in low-incidence disability areas. The *National Directory of Special Education Personnel Preparation Programs* (Blackhurst et al., 1987) was used to identify institutions preparing special education teachers. For the purpose of this study, low-incidence program areas were operationally defined to include hearing impairments, multiple disabilities, orthopedic impairments, other health impairments, visual impairments, and deaf-blindness. In school year 1990–1991, these disability areas individually include no more than 2.2% of school-age children and youth with disabilities and together comprise 6.5% of all students with disabilities (U. S. Department of Education, *Fourteenth Annual Report to Congress*, 1992). In addition, the areas of early childhood special education, bilingual special education, and moderate and severe mental handicaps were added to the program areas to be surveyed. These areas were viewed as representing new and developing areas of training or as areas that have a substantial identity at the training program level and still meet the general definition for low-incidence programs. Each teacher preparation program identified in the *National Directory* (Blackhurst, et al., 1987) as offering a degree program in the above disability categories was sent a pilot survey and asked to participate in the study.

Surveys were sent to personnel preparation programs in 49 states. Alaska was not represented because no low incidence programs there were identified in the *National Directory* (Blackhurst, et al., 1987). The frequency of training programs receiving surveys per state ranged from 1 to 38. Of the 431 surveys sent to training program coordinators, 46 were reported as out of scope (i.e., programs that had been terminated or were nonexistent). The corrected number of surveys sent was 385. As shown in Table 1, 233 surveys were returned for an overall return rate of 60.5%. In contrast to the original program listings in the *National Directory* (Blackhurst,

TABLE 1. Summary of Program Areas Surveyed and Rate of Return

Area	Corrected Number Sent	Number of Surveys Returned	Percentage of Return
Hearing Impaired	66	58	87.9
Deaf-Blind	4	4	100.0
Early Childhood Special Education	74	26	35.1
Visually Impaired	36	29	80.6
Multihandicapped	10	10	100.0
Orthopedic & Other Health Impaired	26	9	34.6
Bilingual Special Education	7	7	100.0
Moderate Mental Handicaps	31	14	45.2
Severe/Profound Handicaps	83	28	33.7
Generic[a]	48	48	100.0
Total	385	233	60.5

[a] Although programs were originally designated as categorical according to the national listing, 48 respondents described their program area as being generic in training focus.

et. al., 1987), 48 programs identified themselves under a different category, which we labeled "generic." Respondents indicated that their state certification standards allowed program graduates to teach children and youth with a wide range of disabilities, including those identified as low-incidence handicapped. Programs in these generic areas produce graduates who are certified to teach children with mild to severe impairments. The generic program area may also be referred to as cross-categorical, meaning that more than one discrete category are included in the label. These 48 generic programs were retained in the study and constitute a separate program training area.

After training programs were identified by type of low-incidence area and by state, a frequency by region of the country was tabulated. Four regions commonly used by the Bureau of the Census were identified: the northeast, south, midwest, and west. Of the 385 surveys, 52 (13.5%) were from the northeast, 130 (33.8%) from the south, 129 (33.5%) from the midwest, and 74 (19.2%) from the west. It should be noted that this survey did not seek to sample training programs by state or region of the country.

Instrument

The authors constructed a prototype survey for use in obtaining a wide range of information from special education teacher preparation programs. This prototype was developed as part of a pilot study designed to precede a larger survey of all special education teacher preparation programs, including both low-incidence and high-incidence areas, to be conducted in 1993–94. Six topical areas, as previously identified, were contained in the survey with characteristic questions under each area. Training program coordinators were asked to respond to the questions and provide appropriate program data. This instrument, the "Personnel Preparation Program Supply and Capacity Survey," was developed during the fall of 1990 and the early spring of 1991. The survey was sent to low-incidence program coordinators in February and March of 1991.

Procedure

Of the 431 programs, 402 were identified as low-incidence areas based on program descriptions listed in the *National Directory* (Blackhurst, et. al., 1987). Because of a limited listing of programs in the areas of deaf/blind, bilingual special education, visually impaired, hearing impaired, and multihandicapped, 29 additional programs were identified in these areas from teacher preparation programs listed with the American Foundation for the Blind and American Annals of the Deaf. The pilot survey was mailed to the program coordinator of each of these low-incidence programs.

The first mailing of the survey was sent in February, 1991. A follow-up letter and survey were sent to nonresponding programs in March, 1991. A third contact, a telephone interview, was initiated between June and August, 1991. In the telephone follow-up, a short form of the questionnaire was used; some items in the mailed survey were

eliminated due to the length of the survey. Thus, item response rates are based on either the combined mail and telephone surveys (n = 233) or on mailed responses (n = 167) alone.

Responses to survey items were coded and analyzed using the *Statistical Package for the Social Sciences* (SPSS, Version 4.0) data analysis program. Data are reported as a composite of all program area responses and, in some instances, separately for each of the nine low-incidence areas plus the generic area.

Results

The results from an analysis of 233 surveys received from program coordinators of low-incidence disability training programs are provided here. Findings derived from the six sets of survey questions identified earlier, i.e., program information, certification processes, recruitment and retention, program capacity, graduate follow-up, and supply/demand are presented.

Program Information

A wide range of program-related information was acquired from survey respondents. Findings from this section of the survey revealed that most (78%) low-incidence special education teacher preparation programs were conducted in public, state-supported institutions. The median number of students being prepared was 35.5 (interquartile range = 57) per program in the typical low-incidence undergraduate and graduate programs. Approximately 29% of all full-time special education faculty were represented in the nine low-incidence areas, and approximately 26% of all student special education majors were enrolled in low-incidence programs.

More low-incidence programs offered master's degrees (n = 185) than bachelor's degrees (n = 152), although more students were reported to be enrolled at the bachelor's level (1699 vs. 1408). Approximately one-third of the respondents (n = 73) prepared doctoral personnel. When the numbers of graduates reported for 1990 and projected for 1993 were compared across four degree levels, there appeared to be a projected increase of graduates at each degree level except at the graduate certificate level. These data are presented in Tables 2 and 3.

It should be noted that when dependent t-tests were performed on data provided by those programs that reported *both* years (1990 and 1993), the projected increase was statistically significant when all four degree levels were combined by area. When numbers of graduates at all levels in 1990 were compared with the numbers projected for 1993, significant increases were reported in the areas of hearing impaired, early childhood, visually impaired, multihandicapped, bilingual special education, moderate mentally impaired, severe/profound impairments, and generic special education. The results of these statistical tests are reported in table 4.

Certification Information

Questions were asked of the respondents concerning state certification processes and how these processes were viewed as affecting their training programs. Fifty-eight (25%) of the respondents stated that their low-incidence programs reflected a mixture of categorical and noncategorical certification. They also indicated that the master's degree was not required for initial certification in most low-incidence areas. Survey participants were asked questions as to whether (a) implementation of more stringent certification requirements or teacher certification tests would reduce enrollments, (b) state certification standards or requirements were more stringent than those in effect 5 years ago, and (c) anticipated state certification requirements projected for 5 years into the future would affect program enrollment. No clear consensus emerged from the combined responses. Perhaps due to the wide differences in state certification processes and individual training program composition, no definite effects of specific certification processes on low-incidence programs were observed in this study.

Recruitment/Retention Information

In response to questions about student enrollment patterns, recruitment, and retention in low-incidence program areas, respondents indicated that enrollment in their

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TABLE 2. Number of Low-Incidence Graduates by Area, 1990

Program	Bachelor's		Graduate Certificate		Master's		Doctorate		
	n of responses	n of graduates	n of responses	n of graduates	n of responses	n of graduates	n of responses	n of graduates	Total Graduates
Hearing Impaired (n = 58)	39	386	18	67	45	257	13	4	714
Early Childhood Handicapped (n = 26)	16	202	14	92	19	144	10	5	443
Visually Impaired (n = 29)	20	59	17	49	25	121	17	7	236
Multihandicapped (n = 10)	7	33	5	10	10	36	2	0	79
Orthopedic & Other Health Impaired (n = 9)	6	140	4	15	7	13	5	4	172
Moderate Mental Handicaps (n = 14)	12	93	6	26	8	35	2	0	154
Severe/Profound Handicaps (n = 28)	15	70	19	184	27	308	10	7	569
Bilingual Special Education (n = 7)	1	0	1	14	6	44	2	4	62
Deaf/Blind (n = 4)	0	0	1	12	3	5	1	0	17
Generic (n = 48)	36	716	20	248	35	445	11	21	1,430
Total Graduates (n = 233)		1,699		717		1,408		52	3,876

program areas was steady (33.9%) or increasing (48.9%) and that more program trainees were female (M = 88.1%) than male (M = 13.1%). The largest ethnic group of students reported was Caucasian (M = 87.8%), with substantially smaller groups representing blacks (M = 8.7%) and Hispanics (M = 7.1%). Minority student enrollment was reported to be substantially unchanged during the past 5 years, although 41.3% of the mail respondents reported recruitment of minority students, and 37.1% reported recruitment for specific training areas.

Program coordinators expressed concern about the need to recruit students, and 27.9% indicated moderate to much success in their recruitment activities. Incentives were offered in the recruitment of students by 35.2% of the programs, whereas 30.0% indicated that no unique incentives were used.

On a question concerning retention of students in training programs, 45.5% of the responding program coordinators indicated that retention of students was not viewed as a problem. Specific retention procedures had been initiated in 16.7% of the programs.

Respondents were asked a question concerning the types and availability of student financial aid. For respondents who described the types of aid 37.8% of the students were reported to receive federal grant support (n = 113), 26.1% received state grant support (n = 88), and 17.1% received local (within institution) support (n = 91).

Program Capacity

National concern has been expressed concerning the capacity of institutions to prepare an adequate supply of new or additional personnel. Survey participants were asked a number of questions concerning program support, long-range planning, enrollments, and employment of graduates. Respondents provided the following picture of the capacity of training programs to supply needed personnel.

The conditions most frequently identified as causing reduction or decrease of trainees were increased costs associated with diminishing financial aid (39.5%), cutbacks in funding (34.1%), and reduction of faculty (26.9%). Sixty-nine percent of respondents indicated that changes in population, tax base, state

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TABLE 3. Number of Low-Incidence Graduates by Area, 1993

Program	Bachelor's		Graduate Certificate		Master's		Doctorate		
	n of re-sponses	n of graduates	n of re-sponses	n of graduates	n of re-sponses	n of graduates	n of re-sponses	n of graduates	Total Graduates
Hearing Impaired (n = 58)	37	516	11	53	43	391	12	14	974
Early Childhood Handicapped (n = 26)	11	162	9	57	18	221	10	8	448
Visually Impaired (n = 29)	16	70	15	83	24	188	13	12	353
Multihandicapped (n = 10)	5	45	4	16	9	58	3	3	122
Orthopedic & Other Health Impaired (n = 9)	6	155	4	47	7	47	5	7	256
Moderate Mental Handicaps (n = 14)	8	82	4	25	8	58	2	0	165
Severe/Profound Handicaps (n = 28)	14	87	14	174	23	305	8	16	582
Bilingual Special Education (n = 7)	1	6	1	19	7	102	3	7	134
Deaf/Blind (n = 4)	0	0	0	0	3	15	0	0	15
Generic (n = 48)	29	748	15	216	29	484	9	29	1,477
Total Graduates (n = 233)		1,871		690		1,869		96	4,526

mandates, or certification processes had not changed the number of students being trained. It was unclear as to whether these trends had specifically changed the number of employment requests for program graduates.

Sixty-seven percent indicated that program

TABLE 4. Comparison of Actual 1990 Graduates to Projected 1993 Gradutes by Program Area

Area	1990 *M* (*sd*)	1993 *M* (*sd*)	Mean Difference	*df*	*t*	*p*
Hearing Impairments	12.30 (12.86)	17.09 (12.43)	4.79	56	−4.50*	.000
Deaf-Blindness	3.50 (2.12)	5.00 (2.83)	1.50	1	−3.00	.205
Early Childhood	16.00 (11.13)	22.79 (13.13)	6.79	18	−4.21*	.001
Visual Impairments	8.12 (8.40)	13.58 (9.74)	5.46	25	−5.15*	.000
Multiple Disabilities	8.11 (5.90)	13.56 (8.05)	5.45	8	−5.29*	.000
Orthopedic & Other Health Impairments	19.11 (22.80)	28.44 (22.56)	9.33	8	−2.26	.054
Bilingual Special Education	10.33 (10.09)	17.33 (10.95)	7.00	5	−7.52*	.001
Moderate Mental Handicaps	12.10 (12.21)	16.50 (14.54)	4.40	9	−3.22*	.011
Severe & Profound Impairments	16.06 (12.36)	21.97 (15.92)	5.91	33	−2.87*	.007
Generic	32.08 (34.57)	37.87 (37.03)	5.79	38	−3.35*	.002

*$p < .05$.

faculty and resources would allow more students to be enrolled and trained, while 16.2% of those surveyed indicated that their program resources were strained or that the enrollment of majors was decreasing.

Graduate Follow-up

Survey respondents were asked to discuss follow-up activities and employment patterns of their graduates. Approximately 37% of them indicated that they tracked or followed up the employment of their program graduates. Most program graduates were reported to locate in the state where they were trained or in the general region. Only 7.3% of the respondents indicated that their graduates did not locate in any particular geographic area.

Supply/Demand

Respondents were asked general questions about the capacity of their programs to respond to state and local needs for personnel. Sixty-seven percent indicated that training programs were not producing sufficient numbers of graduates to meet the current need in their states. Further, 49.4% of the respondents indicated that the combined IHEs in their state could not supply the personnel needs in their low-incidence areas. Thirty-three percent surveyed indicated that they received information from their institution's placement bureau concerning teaching vacancies in their area, while 34.3% indicated that this information was not provided.

When asked if school district hiring of temporary or uncertified personnel diminished the hiring of their program graduates, approximately 46.8% of respondents indicated that these hiring practices did not adversely affect the hiring of their graduates, while 24.5% indicated there was a negative affect.

Discussion

Special education teacher preparation programs were surveyed on a wide range of topics related to the supply of new teaching personnel. Content areas such as program characteristics, present and projected number of graduates, institutional capacity, certification practices, and recruitment and retention practices were surveyed using a sample of low-incidence special education teacher preparation programs. Several of the findings are particularly worthy of note and are discussed here.

Findings from the survey revealed that 78% of the low-incidence teacher preparation programs are located at public, state-supported institutions, where 29% of the full-time faculty and 26% of all the special education majors were identified in the low-incidence areas. There were slightly more students being trained at the bachelor's level and, over a 3-year period, there appeared to be a projected increase in the number of graduates at the bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degree levels, and a decrease projected at the graduate certificate level. When numbers of graduates reported in 1990 were compared with numbers projected for 1993, significant increases were reported in the areas of hearing impaired, multihandicapped, bilingual special education, moderate mental handicaps, bilingual special education, severe/profound impairments, and generic special education. Projections of graduates over this 3-year period were difficult to make, and program coordinators expressed uncertainty in making projections, even for small enrollment programs. It is possible that the responding faculty may have been constrained in making projections of student enrollment when other factors beyond program control may limit capacity and the production of new personnel.

On the topic of certification issues, 25% of the respondents stated that their low-incidence programs reflected a mixture of categorical and noncategorical certification processes. This finding reflects other national studies that have examined the current system for certification and training of special education teachers. Chapey, Pyszkowski, and Trimarco (1985), in a survey of state special education certification policies, found that 25 states were moving toward a generalist concept by certifying teachers noncategorically or generically. Similar findings regarding increased movement by states toward the offering of generic teaching certificates have been reported (Morsink, Thomas, & Smith-Davis, 1987; Cobb, Elliott, Powers, & Voltz, 1989). No clear consensus among respondents was found concerning the projection of

state certification requirements, certification standards, or teacher certification tests. This lack of definite effects of specific certification processes on low-incidence programs may be due to the wide differences in state certification processes and individual training program composition.

Recent concern has been directed toward the recruitment and retention of students in teacher education. Nearly half (48.9%) of the respondents indicated that enrollment in their program area was increasing, and 27.9% indicated moderate to much success in their recruitment activities. Most students were Caucasian (M = 87.8%) and female (M = 88.1%). Although some success in recruiting students had been achieved by the respondents in this study, minimal change in the demographic configuration of trainees had occurred over the last 5 years. Representations of 5% for disabled students, 7% to 9% for black or Hispanic students, and 13% for male students in current training programs are inadequate. Similar findings have been reported by Geiger (1992) and Root and Kennedy (1990). Perhaps more creative program options, such as mentoring and other incentives, should be promoted (Benner & Cagle, 1987; Clemson, 1987; Healy & Welchert, 1990; Miller, Thomson, & Rousch, 1989). Programs that have reported success in recruiting minority students, males, or persons with disabilities need to be studied. The need for student financial support as a recruitment or retention incentive should be monitored (Jones, 1991; Spero, 1987). Concerning recruitment incentives, between 17.1% and 37.8% of student trainees on average were reported to receive some form of financial support. Should these forms of student assistance diminish, the number of trainees may be expected to decrease significantly.

Economic conditions have had some effect on the capacity of the training programs, but to date they have not caused disruption and curtailment of programs. These data were inconsistent, however. Over three-fourths of the programs reported that they had been adversely affected by economic circumstances. Conversely, nearly half of the programs indicated that they still have resources to enroll more students. One-third of the programs reported that they are operating at full capacity but are increasing in enrollment.

The programmatic and economic functions associated with program capacity goals should be examined by each training program. In times of changing national and local educational needs, a close look at the training capacity goals at the program level is in order. Approximately one-third of the respondents indicated that they were conducting long-range planning, yet they expressed difficulty in projecting the number of graduates expected in the near future. The capacity projection is not easy to establish, particularly when unknown conditions such as the economy, state and national reforms, and philosophical perspectives can intervene and alter program goals. Nevertheless, focused attention and planning that is related to department or program training capacity should become a vital part of program administration.

Approximately one-half of the respondents indicated that only when the graduates of all training programs in their state were combined could an adequate supply of personnel needs in their specific low-incidence area be obtained. Forty-nine percent of the respondents reported that the combined training programs in their state failed to meet the personnel needs of local education agencies. Under these conditions, where the demand is demonstrable, the supply short, and capacity to train is open and available, more trainees in the preservice pipeline are needed. If the lack of students in training is a critical point in the supply/demand cycle, direct, remedial actions (e.g., increased recruitment, specific incentives, and increased visibility of high job placement of graduates) would greatly improve supply over time (Fox, 1984; Jones, 1991; Spero, 1987).

Conclusions

The findings of this study have been presented and discussed under six related content areas: (a) institutional program information, (b) certification practices, (c) student recruitment and retention, (d) program capacity, (e) graduate follow-up, and (f) supply/

demand projections. In summary, it is recommended that major attention should be focused on institutional and state certification relationships, program training capacity and the projection of graduates, and student recruitment. This information should be useful to a wide range of educators and policy makers in understanding the many complexities involved in determining supply and demand at the preservice level.

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The NATIONAL AGENDA

for the Education of Children and Youths with Visual Impairments, Including Those with Multiple Disabilities

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The mission of the American Foundation for the Blind (AFB) is to enable persons who are blind or visually impaired to achieve equality of access and opportunity that will ensure freedom of choice in their lives.

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Foreword

The National Agenda for the Education of Children and Youths with Visual Impairments, Including Those with Multiple Disabilities sets forth in clear and concise terms a vision and plan of action for the future of the education of children who are blind or visually impaired, as well as those who have additional disabilities. In these tumultuous times, in which opinions abound concerning the best ways of implementing reform throughout all levels of our educational system, a document such as this shines forth like a beacon, establishing clear-cut, timely, and attainable goals toward which we all should strive.

The eight goals, which comprise the heart of this Agenda and are set forth in this document, reiterate in a simple yet thorough manner the very same concepts that are at the core of our efforts to bring about lasting and effective education reform at the U.S. Department of Education—ensuring that each individual student receives the free and appropriate education to which he or she is entitled under the law.

Along with our efforts, school districts and states around the nation are actively engaged in education reform. Using our Goals 2000 and the School to Work initiatives in concert with the tenets of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) as a framework for change, educators throughout the country are promoting comprehensive strategies for education reform based on high academic and occupational standards, improving teaching, and strengthening family involvement. To ensure that children with disabilities benefit from these reform efforts, our experience has taught us that we should strive for a system of education that helps all children, including children with visual impairments, to learn to high standards.

We have learned that our reform efforts should include 1) challenging standards and aligned assessments for all children; 2) comprehensive state and local reform plans; 3) high-quality professional development aligned to the standards; 4) comprehensive technical assistance; and 5) whole school, rather than categorical, reform efforts.

We envision an education system that would set higher expectations for all students, give all students the opportunity to learn to challenging standards, and take responsibility and be accountable for the success of all children. To the extent appropriate, students with disabilities would have access to the same curricula aligned with the state's content standards that other students are receiving and, with reasonable accommodations, be included in state and local assessments. The needs of stu-

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dents with disabilities would be considered as part of state and local planning for regular education and not regarded solely as special education's responsibility. All teachers (both regular and special) would be trained to teach to high standards.

The goals set forth in this publication—which call for assessments by trained and competent professionals, quick referrals to a full array of appropriate services, appropriate pre-service and in-service training for professionals, parental involvement, and individualized programming—will help fuel this reform movement for visually impaired individuals in positive and meaningful ways.

These goals bring together the combined knowledge and best thinking of hundreds of parents, service providers, individuals with visual impairments, and family members. This combined effort from such a diverse and expert group of individuals will help all of us measure ourselves and our progress over the next five years. It is critical that we continually evaluate our efforts with as much objectivity as possible, because we must do our best to ensure that blind and visually impaired children are given every opportunity afforded to nondisabled children. These goals will help make that evaluation happen in real and concrete ways across the country.

As we move toward the 21st century, our society is changing and growing at an ever-increasing rate. We must ensure that our children can change and grow with it so that they are not left behind, but instead fully participate in every aspect of mainstream societal life. If the children of today and tomorrow are to succeed in this way, then we must set high standards for them, for ourselves, and for our programs. We must expect children to learn to a high level of competency, so they can compete successfully and confidently in the global 21st century society that is fast approaching.

For our part, we will continue to work with all of you—parents, visually impaired persons, educators, school administrators, and legislators—to bring about equality of opportunity in education, employment, and community living. We too share your commitment and your desire for the greatest level of success our children can achieve. Each of these eight goals, these eight signposts and watchwords of wisdom, is a broad brush stroke that will form for us a picture of equality and opportunity. Taken together, they paint a picture of the future, a future based on increased positive outcomes. These goals paint a picture of the future in which all children, regardless of their disability, can achieve to their highest potential, because they have been given every opportunity and aid we

can bring to bear and a future in which professionals are held accountable for doing the job the law intends for them to do. These goals stand as a hallmark of what we want for our children, because they are the same things we want for ourselves. We can expect no less.

Judith E. Heumann
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WHAT THE NATIONAL AGENDA MEANS FOR VISUALLY IMPAIRED CHILDREN

VISUALLY IMPAIRED STUDENTS are infants, toddlers, children, and youths who experience impairments of the eye and visual system that affect their ability to learn. They may be totally blind or they may have visual difficulties in such activities as seeing the print in the textbooks or on the chalkboard, seeing all areas of the typical visual field, or seeing enough detail to interpret the objects in their environment.

Visually impaired students have unique educational needs. Through the sense of sight, much of what is generally referred to as knowledge is received and processed. Children who are visually impaired, therefore, need to learn to acquire knowledge in alternative ways. Learning the necessary compensatory skills and adaptive techniques—such as using braille or optical devices for written communication—requires specialized instruction from teachers and parents who have expertise in addressing disability-specific needs. Some of the other areas uniquely affected by impaired vision are concept development, or the ability to understand the relationships between and functions of objects and abstract ideas; sensory-motor activities, or the ability to coordinate vision, hearing, and other senses with physical actions; socialization; and career or vocational preparation.

Although many school programs are providing the specialized instruction that visually impaired students need in addition to their academic instruction, there is much room for improvement. Too many visually impaired high school students graduate without having mastered the tools for higher education or economic survival. Others, for whom a standard high school diploma may not be achievable, lack the functional skills essential for meaningful participation in adult society. To address the components of education for visually impaired children that are most in need of improvement and to provide goals and strategies for effecting

the needed changes, *The National Agenda for the Education of Children and Youths with Visual Impairments, Including Those with Multiple Disabilities* was created.

This National Agenda represents a broad consensus of how educational programs must change to meet the needs of students with visual impairments. Commitment to achieve each of the eight goals by the year 2000 has come from the full range of individuals involved in the educational service delivery system, including individuals with visual impairments, parents, educators, and professionals responsible for program administration and personnel preparation. Once achieved, it is anticipated the National Agenda will improve overall educational services so that teachers and students will have the tools they need to improve teaching and learning. Partnerships will be strengthened among university training programs, school administrators, educators and parents. Referral and assessment procedures will be enhanced to ensure that all students with visual impairments are learning what they need to know to succeed.

The goals in this document are meant to be realistic. They are *achievable* and *must be achieved* if visually impaired students are to meet the challenges of the 21st century and lead satisfying, productive lives.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE NATIONAL AGENDA

FOLLOWING INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS regarding the need for changes in educational services for visually impaired students, a small group of professionals volunteered to initiate the project of creating a National Agenda. From that small beginning, *The National Agenda for the Education of Children and Youths with Visual Impairments, Including Those with Multiple Disabilities* grew into a collaborative, national effort. The agenda-development steering committee first assembled subcommittees led by representatives from parents' groups, specialized schools for children with visual impairments, private agencies serving visually impaired children and their families, university programs for training teachers of visually impaired students, and state departments of education. The subcommittees developed 19 goal statements, which were then mailed to thousands of teachers of visually impaired students and other related professionals, parents of children with visual impairments, and individuals who are visually impaired. Recipients were asked to duplicate and distribute copies to other interested persons. Each person was asked to rate the likelihood of a goal statement's being achieved by the year 2000 and its impact on the education of children with potential for visual impairments. The agenda-development steering committee used these responses to create the likelihood-impact database. After much discussion, further dissemination, and intense evaluation, the committee condensed these items into the eight goal statements that comprise the National Agenda.

The next step was to identify strategies and sources of support for achieving the goals. To obtain support, organizations throughout the United States were sent copies of the goal statements. A list of the organizations that have endorsed the National Agenda is printed at the end of this document. To carry out the five-year project of achieving the goals, an Advisory Board was developed and eight National Goal Leaders (NGLs) were identified. Members of the Advisory Board and the eight NGLs are

listed later in this document. Each national goal leader is a major organization in the field of visual disability that has committed itself to helping the nation achieve one of the eight goals. Each year the organizations will report to the nation on progress toward reaching their goals. At the 1995 Josephine L. Taylor Leadership Institute, about 100 educators, parents and others met to recommend strategies by which the National Goal Leaders and the nation's educators and parents could achieve the Agenda's goals.

NATIONAL AGENDA GOAL STATEMENTS

ALL THE FOLLOWING goal statements apply to infants, toddlers, children, and youths who are visually impaired, including those with multiple disabilities:

1. Students and their families will be referred to an appropriate education program within 30 days of identification of a suspected visual impairment.
2. Policies and procedures will be implemented to ensure the right of all parents to full participation and equal partnership in the education process.
3. Universities, with a minimum of one full-time faculty member in the area of visual impairment, will prepare a sufficient number of educators of students with visual impairments to meet personnel needs throughout the country.
4. Service providers will determine caseloads based on the needs of students and will require ongoing professional development for all teachers and orientation and mobility instructors.
5. Local education programs will ensure that all students have access to a full array of placement options.
6. Assessment of students will be conducted, in collaboration with parents, by personnel having expertise in the education of students with visual impairments.
7. Access to developmental and educational services will include an assurance that instructional materials are available to students in the appropriate media and at the same time as their sighted peers.
8. Educational and developmental goals, including instruction, will reflect the assessed needs of each student in all areas of academic and disability-specific core curricula.

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IMPORTANCE OF THE GOAL STATEMENTS

THE PROFESSION OF EDUCATION of students with visual impairments has some chronic problems that require concerted, immediate attention. These problems are the driving force behind the need for a National Agenda for the Education of Children and Youths with Visual Impairments, Including Those with Multiple Disabilities. The following section, by offering evidence and examples of the extent of the problems that need to be addressed, explains why each of the Agenda's goals are so critical.

REFERRAL

GOAL STATEMENT 1: **Students and their families will be referred to an appropriate education program within 30 days of identification of a suspected visual impairment.**

Developmental and educational services for children with visual impairments and their families are most effective when they can be made available shortly after diagnosis of a suspected visual impairment. Even though better informed parents and medical professionals and efforts from the teachers of visually impaired students have dramatically decreased the amount of time between diagnosis and educational referral for many children, there are still far too many exceptions to timely referral. Some members of the medical profession believe that, until the government requires them to report disability in infants and preschoolers to a central agency, there will continue to be a delay in referral. However, many professionals in the medical and educational communities as well as many parents believe that mandatory reporting is an invasion of privacy.

Although there seems to be no clear answers to the issue of timely referral, the needs of children—particularly infants and preschoolers—and their families, demand that the educational and medical communities develop a system that ensures children and their families access to information about educational services in a timely manner. Because the medical

diagnosis of a visual impairment will have an impact on learning, early referrals for special education services are imperative for the overall development of young children.

PARENT PARTICIPATION

GOAL STATEMENT 2: **Policies and procedures will be implemented to ensure the right of all parents to full participation and equal partnership in the education process.**

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and its predecessor, Public Law 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, guarantee parents the right to full and equal participation in the education of their children. Many professionals involved in the education of students with visual impairments had recognized the necessity of forming partnerships with parents long before the passage of Public Law 94-142. The fact that no one knows a child better than that child's family has guided the educational plans for students with visual impairments for many years. The law now requires full participation and equal partnership in educational services for parents.

The issue of parent participation and partnership is not only a matter of action; it is perhaps even more a matter of attitude. Old concepts of parental involvement in educational endeavors are difficult to put aside. There are educators who still may believe they lose some status by acknowledging the expertise and investment of parents regarding the education of their children.

It is time for parents and educators to join in a common purpose, namely, the jointly shared responsibility for achieving educational excellence in our schools. When educators appreciate and acknowledge the vital role and input of parents, and when parents are assured equal participation with teachers in educational planning, then, and only then, will students receive the greatest benefits that learning has to offer.

PERSONNEL PREPARATION

GOAL STATEMENT 3: **Universities, with a minimum of one full-time faculty member in the area of visual impairment, will prepare a sufficient number of educators of students with visual impairments to meet personnel needs throughout the country.**

There has never been a time in the recent history of the education of visually impaired students when there were enough specialized teachers to

meet students' needs. Universities have, since the 1950s, been urged to prepare more teachers and seek new and innovative ways of recruiting students and delivering courses. From the early 1960s until the early 1980s, federal funds provided opportunities to begin many new university personnel preparation programs and to offer financial assistance to students. As federal funds became more competitive and less available, however, some universities dismantled personnel preparation programs in the area of visual impairment. In some instances, faculty were employed with federal grant money, but when the funds were no longer available, the university eliminated the faculty position. In other cases, recruitment became increasingly difficult when financial support for students was no longer available, and university programs closed because of low student enrollment.

Several important lessons have been learned about university programs in recent years. First, at least one full-time faculty member with experience and expertise in the education of children with visual impairments, or orientation and mobility, or both, is needed if a university is to offer a comprehensive program of teacher preparation. Second, this faculty member must be in a tenure-track position. Third, the program must be given the flexibility to provide learning opportunities in creative ways. Fourth, the university must support low prevalence programs and recognize that size of enrollment cannot be the determining factor as to whether or not a class is offered.

Because of the many requirements just described, bold and creative efforts must be forthcoming with regard to the manner in which teachers are prepared. The challenge is to prepare a sufficient number of educators so that all children who are visually impaired, including those with multiple disabilities, will have the educational services they need. Meeting this challenge will require that skilled and knowledgeable teachers must be available to work in rural areas as well as in the inner cities, and that these teachers must have the skills to provide instruction for an ethnically and culturally diverse group of children. It also means that teachers must learn to successfully cooperate with other team members so that the visually impaired children who confront the most educational challenges receive appropriate instruction. And, it means that existing personnel preparation programs in universities must at least double the number of teachers trained within the next five years.

PROVISION OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

GOAL STATEMENT 4: **Service providers will determine caseloads based on the needs of students and will require ongoing professional development for all teachers and orientation and mobility instructors.**

In recent years, there has been a movement toward merging programs for educating children with a wide variety of disabilities. In such programs, visually impaired students are not provided with teachers who have the disability-specific expertise to teach the adaptive and compensatory skills that visually impaired children need to succeed in school. Reference to specific disabilities has begun to be taken out of state legislation, leaving no means by which distinctions could be made regarding the necessary frequency and duration of specialized services.

As a result of reallocations of special education funding, in some situations, this provided local school districts with the opportunity to increase substantially the caseloads of teachers of students with visual impairments. Many visually impaired students are integrated into regular classrooms, and a large number of these students receive their disability-specific instruction from itinerant teachers who visit children in their home schools. These teachers are often responsible for providing individual instruction to visually impaired children across an extremely large geographic area. In some sections of the country, itinerant teachers have caseloads of 50 or more, which means that many students receive insufficient instruction.

For students to graduate with the skills they need, caseloads must be determined by needs of students, not by economic constraints or a lack of understanding on the part of administrators regarding the time needed for specific instruction. Most educators would agree that a caseload of more than 15 is not appropriate, because at least some of those students will have intensive needs. Of course, the geographic spread of the students will also affect the size of an appropriate caseload.

National Agenda goal area #8 addresses a core curriculum for visually impaired students including those with multiple disabilities which includes academic content areas as well as compensatory skills related to visual impairment. As the profession of the education of visually impaired children becomes more committed to providing instruction in all areas of the core curriculum, teachers will discover they need to spend

more time with their students to meet all their needs. In addition, as the profession becomes more knowledgeable of the educational needs of students with low vision, it becomes clear that it is not accurate to make decisions regarding caseloads solely on the basis of the severity of visual impairment. Many children with low vision have intensive instructional needs which are the responsibility of the teacher for students with visual impairments. Informed school administrators will respond to the needs of children who are visually impaired by providing specialized instruction on the basis of the individual needs of children.

The knowledge base regarding educational programming for students with visual impairments continually grows and expands. Unless professional development is encouraged, or even required, the teacher who was university prepared five years ago is in need of additional knowledge and skills today. Skills in areas such as functional low vision assessment, learning media assessment, utilization of low vision devices, instruction in reading and writing braille, use of technology, and instruction in using graphic designs have all gone through recent innovations. Local districts, specialized schools, and state departments of education have a professional responsibility to require and support teachers in remaining up to date in their skills and knowledge and to facilitate inservice training opportunities.

ARRAY OF SERVICES

Goal Statement 5: **Local education programs will ensure that all students have access to a full array of placement options.**

Educators of visually impaired children serve an extremely heterogeneous population of students. Wide variations exist regarding such factors as the type and degree of visual impairment, the presence of additional disabilities, the time at which the visual impairment occurred, the urban or rural environment in which the child lives, and the resources of the child's school district.

School districts cannot meet the educational needs of this heterogeneous population with only one or two placement options. Educators of students with visual impairments pioneered inclusive education, placing children with visual impairments in regular classrooms a century before our colleagues in special education began the current "full inclusion" movement, which calls for children with disabilities to be educated in regular classrooms; some educators who advocate for full inclusion want

to eliminate all other placement options. Pioneering efforts in the education of visually impaired students resulted in some important lessons, among them the realization that a full array of placement options is necessary to meet the individual educational needs of all students with visual impairments. This array includes, but is not limited to, such options as specialized schools, resource room programs, and regular education placement with itinerant services.

Federal law requires an array of placement options for students with disabilities. But even more important than this requirement are the conclusions, based on experience and educational expertise, that the changing and diverse needs of students with visual impairments require an array of placement options.

ASSESSMENT

GOAL STATEMENT 6: **Assessment of students will be conducted, in collaboration with parents, by personnel having expertise in the education of students with visual impairments.**

Careful and comprehensive assessments of students with visual impairments are essential if instructional programs are to meet individual needs. Historically, school psychologists or educational diagnosticians were assigned the task of assessing all students with disabilities. This approach has often resulted in incomplete or inaccurate assessments.

Of particular importance is that assessments be comprehensive. Because they have unique extra-academic needs to learn adaptive skills to compensate for their visual impairment, assessments that measure only academic skills are not appropriate for students with visual impairments. The assessment that consists of only academics and functional low vision is likewise not acceptable, because other factors, such as emotional readiness, independence, alternative communication modes and adaptive skills, must also be considered. All areas of the core curriculum for students with visual impairments must be assessed. Only when all information concerning all areas of the core curriculum is available can responsible, knowledgeable decisions regarding a child's educational program take place.

Quality assessments require that the professional conducting or orchestrating the assessment be someone with a high level of expertise in the effects of visual impairment on learning. This professional will most often be the teacher of students with visual impairments or the orientation and mobility instructor.

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ACCESS TO INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

GOAL STATEMENT 7: **Access to developmental and educational services will include an assurance that instructional materials are available to students in the appropriate media and at the same time as their sighted peers.**

In the early years of placing students with visual impairments in regular classrooms, one of the phrases often heard was "the right book in the right media at the right time." This statement is true today. Receiving braille texts several months late can make a potentially appropriate placement into an inappropriate one. Even before the advent of computer-generated braille, optical devices, and advanced techniques for producing large print, timely delivery of appropriate texts was achievable with concerted effort. When new technologies for producing braille and large print became available, it seemed that timely delivery of instructional materials would no longer be a problem. However, this is not the case. Many students still do not receive the appropriate instructional materials at the same time as their sighted classmates. With the technology available today, there is no valid excuse for this delay.

Systems must be developed to eliminate delays in each child's receiving the instructional materials needed to access the same learning opportunities as sighted peers. Accessibility to equal education, as mandated by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), must include immediate and equal access to appropriate tools for learning.

CORE CURRICULUM

GOAL STATEMENT 8: **Educational and developmental goals, including instruction, will reflect the assessed needs of each student in all areas of academic and disability-specific core curricula.**

Much is known about the disability-specific needs of students with visual impairments. Beginning with anecdotal data gathered on high school graduates, it became apparent that the educational needs of students extend far beyond academic learning. The first disability-specific need to be isolated, described, and offered as a school subject in public schools was instruction in orientation and mobility (concepts and skills needed to travel safely and independently). It was recognized that for most children with normal vision, the ability to travel safely and with ease in the environment was learned in a casual, unconscious, and natural manner.

Visually impaired children could also travel safely and with ease, but they needed careful, systematic instruction to accomplish this.

Other disability-specific areas of need have been identified. There are a variety of lists that describe them. Although the number of needs and the words used to define them may vary, there is general agreement regarding the content of those needs. In many cases, the term "disability-specific needs" has been changed. In many states, "core curriculum" refers to the body of knowledge that a student is required to master before high school graduation.

For several years professionals have discussed the concept of a "core curriculum" for students with visual impairments. Local school districts and specialized schools which have demonstrated models of "best practice" have included such a core in their programs. They have realized that to be successful as visually impaired children and later as adults, a specific body of knowledge and skills must be learned. Presently, we can articulate what the core curriculum contains. As we further our understanding of how visual impairments impact on learning, we also know that the core will evolve and change.

The core curriculum for students with visual impairments consists of two parts. The first parallels that which is provided to sighted peers. Pre-learning, such as developing an understanding of visual concepts involved in a given lesson, and adaptations, such as altering the lesson to provide access by the visually impaired student, are often necessary when presenting academic instruction required of all students. Much of the pre-learning and adaptations can and should occur in the regular classroom. In such a way, the student with a visual impairment receiving education at a local school can experience success in an inclusive setting. For students in specialized schools, these parts of the core curriculum may take place at the specialized school or through a cooperative arrangement with a local school in the community.

The second part of the core curriculum addresses the unique, specialized needs of visually impaired learners. These needs are directly related to the visual impairment and, therefore, are not shared by sighted peers. This part of the curriculum is expected to be taught by a teacher of students with visual impairments. This specialized part of the core includes, but may not be limited to the following:

- Compensatory Skills, such as Communication Modes,
- Orientation and Mobility,
- Social Interaction Skills,
- Independent Living Skills,

- Recreation and Leisure Skills,
- Career Education,
- Use of Assistive Technology,
- Visual Efficiency Skills.

The student with a visual impairment will need to be assessed in all areas of the core curriculum, and decisions will have to be made regarding the need for instruction in each area. For instruction in those core curriculum areas determined to be needed by an individual student, time must be allocated, and frequency and duration of instruction must be determined.

Only when the goals and instruction fully reflect the assessed needs in all areas of the core curriculum for each student will educators of visually impaired children be able to meet their instructional obligations to all children with visual impairments.

STRATEGIES FOR ACHIEVING THE GOAL STATEMENTS

GOAL 1
Students and their families will be referred to an appropriate education program within 30 days of identification of a suspected visual impairment.

Recommended NATIONAL Strategies

1. Identify existing fact sheets and other materials describing visual impairments in children and youths and incorporate them into a single document which addresses:
   - Observable signs of visual impairments in children,
   - Recommended procedures for referral to appropriate services,
   - Guidelines for developing working relationships among families, educators, related service providers and medical and health care professionals,
   - Suggestions for encouraging health care management organizations to include these materials in their public education materials.
2. Identify members of the National Association for Parents of the Visually Impaired (NAPVI) or other parent organizations within each state able to serve as contact persons and to provide referral information such as is delineated in Strategy #1 above.
3. Work with professional organizations to ensure that their members have the necessary knowledge to serve as advocates for early referral of children with visual impairments including those with multiple disabilities. Organizations should include but not be limited to those whose members include:
   - Eye care specialists,
   - Neo-natologists,
   - Regular education as well as special education personnel.

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Recommended REGIONAL, STATE and/or LOCAL Strategies

1. Work with Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs), day care and Head Start centers, public service organizations and others to:
   - Disseminate materials regarding visual impairments and referral procedures including resources for state and local contacts,
   - Provide eye care professionals and related service providers with public education materials regarding identification and referral of children with visual impairments including those with multiple disabilities.
2. Work with early childhood education intervention coordinators within each state to develop effective referral systems.

GOAL 2
Policies and procedures will be implemented to ensure the right of all parents to full participation and equal partnership in the education process.

Recommended NATIONAL Strategies

1. Establish within the National Association for Parents of the Visually Impaired (NAPVI) an advisory committee, specific to the unique needs of students with visual impairments including those with multiple disabilities, to promote increased collaboration among parents, professionals and government agencies.
2. Establish parent/teacher training center(s) with emphasis on parent-to-parent mentoring, parent-professional dialogue and resource development.
3. Create and disseminate an array of educational resources for parents which includes among others the following:
   - Information on the full array of educational options,
   - National Outcome Standards,
   - Explanation of the Individual Education Plan (IEP) process, including sample IEPs for students with visual impairments including those with multiple disabilities.
4. Develop partnerships among students, parents, educators and administrators which ensure communication, mutual respect and the provision of educational services within a child-centered climate.
5. Encourage all personnel preparation programs and the Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER) national certification programs to adopt competencies and standards relating to parents of students with visual impairments including those with multiple disabilities.

Recommended REGIONAL, STATE and/or LOCAL Strategies

1. Establish parent advisory boards at state and local levels specific to the needs of students with visual impairments including those with multiple disabilities.
2. Disseminate the array of educational resources for parents developed through National Strategy #3 above at regional, state and local levels.
3. Develop state and local mentoring programs that link experienced parents with families of newly diagnosed children who have visual impairments including those with multiple disabilities.
4. Conduct family-centered conferences, involving medical as well as education professionals, which focus on advocacy related to developmental and educational needs of students with visual impairments including those with multiple disabilities.
5. Draft and facilitate passage of legislation that would require Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to collect, document and publish data reflecting parents' satisfaction levels with the IEP process and educational services that impact upon the LEAs' compliance with state and federal laws.

GOAL 3

Universities, with a minimum of one full-time faculty member in the area of visual impairment, will prepare a sufficient number of educators of students with visual impairments to meet personnel needs throughout the country.

Recommended NATIONAL Strategies

1. Develop a model of excellence for personnel preparation.
2. Encourage establishment of a national research center on the education of students with visual impairments including those with multiple disabilities.
3. Develop a collaborative national recruitment program in conjunction with the Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER).
4. Encourage all university personnel preparation programs in the area of education of students with visual impairments to implement national standards.
5. Determine the number of teachers of students with visual impairments as well as orientation and mobility specialists who graduate from university preparation programs in 1995. Ensure that the number who will graduate in the year 2000 is the same or greater than the number for 1995.

Recommended REGIONAL, STATE and/or LOCAL Strategies

1. Encourage collaborative planning among special education administrators and personnel preparation programs to establish and provide professional development programs.
2. Develop, in conjunction with state departments of education, accurate counts of the number of students with visual impairments including those with multiple disabilities served in each state.
3. Establish systems of career leadership options that incorporate, among other categories, mentors, master teachers, master orientation and mobility (O&M) specialists, and teachers-as-researchers.
4. Facilitate a means for achieving reciprocity of teacher credentialing among all states.
5. Identify incentives by which school districts can be encouraged to ensure that teachers with "emergency credentials" become appropriately credentialed in the area of education for students with visual impairments including those with multiple disabilities.

GOAL 4
Service providers will determine caseloads based on the needs of students and will require ongoing professional development for all teachers and orientation and mobility instructors.

Recommended NATIONAL Strategies

1. Develop and disseminate a position paper which makes a clear and unequivocal statement about appropriate caseloads for teachers of visually impaired students and orientation and mobility (O&M) specialists and which is endorsed by parent, consumer and professional organizations.
2. Identify and publicize approaches to service delivery options which are both innovative and meet the educational needs of students who have visual impairments including those with multiple disabilities.
3. Develop a system for child-centered caseload analysis, population analysis and job descriptions for teachers of students with visual impairments and O&M specialists in various service delivery models.
4. Develop an information base regarding training programs and models of on-going professional development which include, but are not limited to:
   - Support groups,
   - Independent study,

- Distance education,
- Mentoring programs,
- Data bases.

5. Disseminate information to practicing teachers and their employers regarding the importance of and need for ongoing professional development.

Recommended REGIONAL, STATE and/or LOCAL Strategies

1. Promote the use of data obtained through implementation of National Strategy #3 above to assist Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to establish guidelines for determining appropriate size and composition of student caseloads.
2. Encourage state departments of education to include guidelines for determining appropriate caseload size and composition in state special education plans.
3. Provide data on various service delivery models that will assist LEAs in developing and implementing appropriate program options.
4. Develop mechanisms to encourage involvement of teachers and O&M specialists as researchers to address issues relating to ongoing professional development.
5. Implement models for meeting professional development needs and developing creative credentialing programs with support from professional organizations, direct service providers and personnel preparation programs.

GOAL 5
Local education programs will ensure that all students have access to a full array of placement options.

Recommended NATIONAL Strategies

1. Encourage the U.S. Office of Special Education Programs (OSEPS) to both adopt the policy statement entitled "Policy Guidance on the Education of Blind or Visually Impaired Students" and promote its implementation nationally among the following:
   - State departments of education,
   - Professional organizations,
   - Parent organizations,
   - Consumer organizations,
   - Other related service organizations such as Easter Seals and Lions Clubs.

2. Develop ongoing relationships with the above organizations and others as appropriate for the purpose of promoting advocacy for a full array of placement options.
3. Conduct public education campaigns which illustrate personal success stories across all components of the educational placement array.
4. Develop an information package addressed to administrators of regular and special education programs and parents which includes but is not limited to:
   - All relevant OSEPS policy statements,
   - All relevant position papers on full array of placement options,
   - Descriptions of each placement option within the array,
   - Comprehensive legal briefs targeted to Individual Education Plan (IEP) teams and parents addressing placement in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE),
   - Descriptions of parents' rights and due process.

Recommended REGIONAL, STATE and/or LOCAL Strategies

1. Disseminate all relevant OSEPS policy statements to state and local organizations and individuals concerned with the education of students with visual impairments including those with multiple disabilities.
2. Provide inservice training for individuals involved in making program and placement decisions regarding students with visual impairments including those with multiple disabilities. This should include but not be limited to the following:
   - Information about each of the service delivery models included in a full array of placement options,
   - Strategies for application of this knowledge as it relates to decisions regarding placements.

GOAL 6
Assessment of students will be conducted, in collaboration with parents, by personnel having expertise in the education of students with visual impairments.

Recommended NATIONAL Strategies

1. Using the core curriculum for students with visual impairments including those with multiple disabilities (refer to National Agenda Goal #8), develop and distribute guidelines for selection and administration of assessment instruments and interpretation of their results.
2. Establish a national resource bank on assessment of students with visual impairments including those with multiple disabilities that would:

- Compile a bibliography of resources, articles, books and tools addressing assessment issues,
- Identify exemplary assessment models and components and disseminate information describing them,
- Establish a national listing of professionals and parents with expertise in assessment who are available to provide consultation and training.

3. Develop assessment team training curricula for educators and related service providers who assess children and youths with visual impairments including those with multiple disabilities and disseminate by:
   - Conducting workshops using the curricula at conferences of the appropriate professionals and related service providers,
   - Producing training videos for targeted audiences demonstrating an outcome-based comprehensive assessment.
4. Provide resources and information to personnel preparation programs in related service areas designed to facilitate and encourage the use of transdisciplinary assessments.
5. Encourage the wide-spread dissemination and application of the Council for Exceptional Children/Division for Visually Handicapped (CEC/DVH) position paper on assessment of children and youths with visual impairments including those with multiple disabilities.

Recommended REGIONAL, STATE and/or LOCAL Strategies

1. Work through state education agencies to develop policies to ensure participation of a teacher of students with visual impairments and, as warranted, an orientation and mobility specialist in assessments of all students with diagnosed or suspected visual impairments.
2. Apply the assessment team training curricula developed through National Strategy #3 above at regional, state and local conferences of educators and providers of related services.
3. Write and distribute to developers of standardized state-adopted testing programs guidelines for addressing the needs of students with visual impairments including those with multiple disabilities.

GOAL 7

Access to developmental and educational services will include an assurance that instructional materials are available to students in the appropriate media and at the same time as their sighted peers.

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Recommended NATIONAL Strategies

1. Report to the field the current status of production and acquisition of materials in specialized formats and media appropriate for meeting developmental and educational needs of students with visual impairments including those with multiple disabilities.
2. Work toward establishment of a national repository of publisher electronic files for production of textbooks in braille and other specialized formats.
3. Gain passage of legislation at all levels which ensures timely access to educational materials in appropriate formats for all students with visual impairments.
4. Secure timely copyright permission for production of large type and braille materials through such efforts as:
   - Advocating for revisions as appropriate of the National Copyright Act,
   - Encouraging stipulations regarding copyright permission in author-publisher contracts,
   - Negotiating with publishers to ensure that accessibility needs of visually impaired students are provided for when producing multimedia educational materials.
5. Develop and disseminate comprehensive guidelines to ensure quality control in the production of educational materials in specialized formats including meaningful tactile graphics.
6. Work with teachers and other direct service providers to ensure that access to print, using optical devices as appropriate, is included in all considerations of appropriate media for students with visual impairments including those with multiple disabilities.

Recommended REGIONAL, STATE and/or LOCAL Strategies

1. Assist state and local education agencies to increase production and timely distribution of educational materials in specialized formats such as braille, recorded, large-print and electronic.
2. Encourage state and local education agencies to ensure that vision specific needs are addressed in the selection/adoption processes for textbooks and other educational materials.
3. Provide information and materials to assist with training or professional development of service providers who must identify and/or modify educational materials to meet needs of visually impaired students including those with multiple disabilities.
4. Work with state departments of education and other agencies as appropriate to ensure that computer hardware and software procured for instructional use are accessible to visually impaired students.

GOAL 8
Educational and developmental goals, including instruction, will reflect the assessed needs of each student in all areas of academic and disability-specific core curricula.

Recommended NATIONAL Strategies

1. Clearly define, develop and disseminate the disability-specific core curriculum areas for students with visual impairments including those with multiple disabilities.
2. Evaluate and catalog curricular guides and make them available for dissemination along with model goals which are disability-specific and appropriately written for inclusion in Individual Education Plans (IEPs).
3. Write core curricular content for disability-specific areas as needed.
4. Make annotated bibliographies available either in hard copy or through electronic means to professionals and parents.
5. Work to obtain formal adoption of the disability-specific core curriculum by national organizations of professionals and others.
6. Work to ensure that personnel preparation and professional development programs adopt and teach the use of the disability-specific core curriculum.

Recommended REGIONAL, STATE and/or LOCAL Strategies

1. Identify and present to target audiences, i.e. students, parents, local eduction agencies and others, knowledge of the disability-specific core curriculum.
2. Condense and rewrite one-page descriptions of the core curriculum for each constituent audience.
3. Organize awareness materials to be used at meetings of each constituent audience.
4. Educate those responsible for writing IEP goals to ensure that goals and objectives are based on assessment data related to the core curriculum.
5. Collaborate with universities and adult service agencies to ensure that programs serving students with visual impairments including those with multiple disabilities are appropriately preparing them for their futures.

ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOAL STATEMENTS

THE MANY INDIVIDUALS involved in the process of identifying and developing the goals put forth in *The National Agenda for the Education of Children and Youths with Visual Impairments, Including Those with Multiple Disabilities* believe each goal can be achieved by the year 2000. They further believe the implementation of the strategies delineated for each goal, and other strategies which will emerge, will facilitate achievement of these goals. At the time this document went to press, one hundred twenty-four organizations and agencies of and for persons with visual impairments had endorsed the goals stated in this National Agenda. There is agreement that this Agenda is as it should be, and that it is needed. Likewise, there is a commitment to work toward achievement of these goals by the turn of the century.

The task before us is a challenge and an invitation. It is an invitation to everyone concerned for the education of students with visual impairments, including those with multiple disabilities. Clearly, as we proceed to implement the identified strategies, additional tactics for achieving the goals will be identified. To avoid being diverted, we will need to focus judiciously on the established goals.

The time to act is now. The charge to the National Goal Leaders (NGLs) and National Agenda Advisory Board is imposing. It is our charge, as well. We must work in partnership with them, students, parents, school administrators, legislators, teachers, orientation and mobility specialists, psychologists, health care management personnel, and thousands of others involved in the lives and provision of educational services for students who are visually impaired. We must contact the NGLs with offers of our time, talents, expertise and energy. At national, state and local levels, and in every service-delivery arena we can use our influence to generate support for this vital national endeavor.

The plan is in place and has been set in motion. This National Agenda has been identified by us and can only be achieved by us. The next step is action.

NATIONAL AGENDA STEERING COMMITTEE

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Professor of Special Education
Peabody College, Vanderbilt University
Nashville, TN

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Superintendent
Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired, Austin, TX

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Director
Graduate Programs in Education and Rehabilitation
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Pennsylvania College of Optometry, Philadelphia, PA

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National Program Associate in Education
American Foundation for the Blind
San Francisco, CA

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National Program Associate in Education
American Foundation for the Blind
Dallas, TX

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NATIONAL AGENDA ADVISORY BOARD

The Advisory Board is composed of visually impaired persons, parents, and professionals.

Kate Aldrich
National Association for Parents of the Visually Impaired
Santa Rosa, CA

Dr. Joy Efron, ***Coordinating Principal***
Program for Visually Impaired Students
Los Angeles Unified School District, Los Angeles, CA

Warren Figueiredo, ***Resource Specialist***
Braille and Technology Center
Louisiana School for the Visually Impaired, Baton Rouge, LA

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Sue Melrose, ***Computer Access Consultant***
New Berlin, WI

Herb Miller, ***Superintendent***
St. Joseph's School for the Blind
Jersey City, NJ

Kevin O'Connor, ***President***
National Association for Parents of the Visually Impaired
Hawthorne Woods, IL

Jay Stiteley, ***Field Services Representative***
The Seeing Eye, Inc.
Morristown, NJ

Donna Stryker
National Association for Parents of the Visually Impaired
Las Cruces, NM

Dr. Karen Wolffe
Career Counseling and Consultation
Manchaca, TX

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NATIONAL GOAL LEADERS

GOAL 1: Referral
National Goal Leader: Foundation for Blind Children
1235 East Harmont Drive
Phoenix, AZ 85020
(602) 331-1470
Contact: Chris Tompkins

GOAL 2: Parent Participation
National Goal Leader: National Association for Parents of the Visually Impaired (NAPVI)
P.O. Box 317
Watertown, MA 02272-0317
(617) 972-7441
Contact: Susan LaVenture

GOAL 3: Personnel Preparation
National Goal Leader: Division 17, Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER)
c/o University of Northern Colorado, Division of Special Education
Greeley, CO 80639
(303) 351-2691
Contact: Dr. Kay Ferrell

GOAL 4: Provision of Educational Services
National Goal Leader: Association of State Education Consultants for the Visually Impaired
c/o Indiana Department of Education, Division of Special Education
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Indianapolis, IN 46204
(317) 232-0570
Contact Person: Sharon Knoth

GOAL 5: Array of Services
National Goal Leader: Council of Schools for the Blind
c/o Indiana School for the Blind
7725 North College Avenue
Indianapolis, IN 46240
(317) 253-1481
Contact: Dr. Michael Bina

GOAL 6: Assessment
National Goal Leader: The National Center for Vision and Child Development, The Lighthouse, Inc.
111 East 59th Street
New York, NY 10022
(212) 821-9200
Contact: Dr. Mary Ann Lang

GOAL 7: Access to Instructional Materials

National Goal Leader: Association of Instructional Resource Centers for the Visually Impaired
c/o Florida Instructional Materials Center
5002 North Lois Avenue
Tampa, FL 33614
(813) 872-5281
Contact: Suzanne Dalton

GOAL 8: Core Curriculum

National Goal Leader: Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired
1100 West 45th Street
Austin, TX 78756
(512) 454-8631
Contact: Dr. Phil Hatlen

ENDORSEMENTS

The organizations listed below have endorsed the National Agenda by signing the following statement:

> *"[NAME OF ORGANIZATION] ENDORSES* THE NATIONAL AGENDA FOR THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN AND YOUTHS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS, INCLUDING THOSE WITH MULTIPLE DISABILITIES. *OUR ORGANIZATION WILL ENDEAVOR TO WORK TOWARD ACHIEVING ITS GOALS WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF OUR PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTHS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES."*

National Organizations

American Council of the Blind
American Foundation for the Blind
American Printing House for the Blind
Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired
Blind Children's Fund
Choices for Children
Council for Exceptional Children
Delta Gamma Foundation
Descriptive Video Service
Hadley School for the Blind
Helen Keller National Center for Deaf-Blind Youths and Adults
Lions World Services for the Blind
National Accreditation Council for Agencies Serving the Blind and Visually Impaired
National Association for Parents of the Visually Impaired
National Industries for the Blind
National Marfan Foundation
National Organization for Albinism and Hypopigmentation
Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Blindness and Low Vision

Specialized Schools

Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind
Arizona State Schools for the Deaf and the Blind
California School for the Blind
Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind
Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind

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Georgia Academy for the Blind
Idaho School for the Deaf and the Blind
Illinois School for the Visually Impaired
Indiana School for the Blind
Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School
Kansas State School for the Blind
Lavelle School for the Blind, New York
Louisiana School for the Visually Impaired
Maryland School for the Blind
Michigan School for the Blind
Mississippi School for the Blind
Missouri School for the Blind
Nebraska School for the Visually Handicapped
New York Institute for Special Education
Ohio State School for the Blind
Overbrook School for the Blind, Pennsylvania
Parkview School, Oklahoma
Perkins School for the Blind, Massachusetts
South Carolina School for the Deaf and the Blind
Saint Joseph's School for the Blind, New Jersey
Tennessee School for the Blind
Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired
Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind
Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind, Hampton
Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind, Staunton
Washington State School for the Blind
West Virginia Schools for the Deaf and the Blind
Western Pennsylvania School for Blind Children
Wisconsin School for the Visually Handicapped

Multiservice Private and State Agencies

Anchor Center for Blind Children, Denver, CO
Blind Association of Western New York Visually Impaired Preschool, Amherst, NY
Blind Babies Foundation, San Francisco, CA
Blind Childrens Center, Los Angeles, CA
Blind Children's Learning Center, Santa Ana, CA
Center for Blind and Visually Impaired Children, Milwaukee, WI
Center for the Visually Impaired, Atlanta, GA
Chicago Lighthouse for People Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired, Chicago, IL
Children's Center for the Visually Impaired, Kansas City, MO
Crotched Mountain Rehabilitation Center, Greenfield, NH
Dallas Services for Visually Impaired Children, Dallas, TX
Delco Blind/Sight Center, Chester, PA

Delta Gamma Center for Children with Visual Impairments, St. Louis, MO
Foundation for Blind Children, Phoenix, AZ
Foundation for the Junior Blind, Los Angeles, CA
Greater Pittsburgh Guild for the Blind, Pittsburgh, PA
Helen Keller Services for the Blind, Brooklyn, NY
Jewish Guild for the Blind, New York, NY
The Lighthouse, Inc., New York, NY
Living Skills Center for the Visually Handicapped, San Pablo, CA
PennTech, Pennsylvania Department of Education, Harrisburg, PA
The Rehabilitation Center, New Haven, CT
Southern Access, Inc., Marietta, GA
Vision Associates, Orlando, FL
Vision Enrichment Services, Grand Rapids, MI

Local Education Agency Programs

Catholic Charities Maine/Education Services for Blind and Visually Impaired, Augusta, ME
Charleston County School District, Charleston, SC
Columbia Regional Program: Vision Services, Portland, OR
DeKalb County Schools, Visually Impaired Program, Atlanta, GA
Los Angeles Unified School District Program for Visually Impaired Students, Los Angeles, CA
Memphis City Schools, Memphis, TN
New York City Public Schools, New York, NY
Special Education Service Agency, Anchorage, AK
Tyler D.C. Vision Program, Washington, D.C.
Visually Impaired Students Advisory Board of the Vision Services Center, Bethesda, MD
Visually Impaired Preschool Services, Louisville, KY

State Organizations and Departments of Education

Advocates and Parents of Oklahoma's Sight Impaired
California Low Incidence Disability Advisory Committee
California Transcribers and Educators for the Visually Handicapped
Colorado Department of Education
Connecticut Parents' Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired
Florida Department of Education, Division of Blind Services

Ho'Opono Services for the Blind, Hawaii Department of Human Services
Iowa Bureau of Special Education
Maine State Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired
New York State Resource Center for the Visually Impaired
North Carolina Department of Public Instruction Exceptional Children's Support Team
Northern California Chapter of the Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired
Tennessee State Department of Education
Texas Commission for the Blind
Texas Education Agency

Personnel Preparation Programs in Visual Impairment at Colleges and Universities

California State University at Los Angeles
Dominican College, New York
Florida State University
Hunter College, City University of New York
Michigan State University
Northern Illinois University
Pennsylvania College of Optometry
San Francisco State University
Texas Tech University
University of Arizona
University of Arkansas at Little Rock
University of North Dakota
University of Northern Colorado
University of Pittsburgh Vision Studies Program
University of South Carolina
Vanderbilt University, Tennessee
Western Michigan University

Low Vision Centers

Center for the Partially Sighted, Santa Monica, CA
Low Vision Services, Utah Division of State Services for the Visually Handicapped, Salt Lake City, UT
Saint Mary Low Vision Center, Long Beach, CA

Other

Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority Resource Centre for the Visually Impaired, Nova Scotia, Canada

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Many individuals, local chapters of national organizations, and manufacturers of assistive devices have endorsed the National Agenda. While these endorsements have been acknowledged, space restrictions preclude listing them in this publication.

National Clearinghouse for Professions in Special Education

Higher Education Programs for Personnel Preparation in Visual Impairments / Blindness in the United States

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Key to abbreviations used on this list:

Level of Program Abbreviations
Advanced graduate program not leading to a degree -- A
Program leading to and associate degree -- AS
Program leading to certification for paraprofessionals -- CP
Program leading to a doctoral degree -- D
Post-baccalaureate or Master's Degree Program -- G
Undergraduate or Bachelor's Degree Program -- UG

Program and Preparation Abbreviations
Disability Descriptors
Autism -- AUT
Deaf-Blindness -- DBL
Emotional Disturbance/Behavioral Disorders -- EBD
Generic Special Education -- GSPED
Gifted/Talented Individuals -- GIFT
Hearing Impairments/Deafness -- DEAF
Learning Disabilities -- LD
Mental Retardation -- MR
Mild Disabilities -- MILD
Moderate/Severe Disabilities -- MODSEV
Multiple Disabilities -- MULT
Orthopedic Impairments -- ORTHO
Other Health Impairments -- HLTH
Severe Disabilities -- SEVR
Speech/Language Impairment -- SPCH
Traumatic Brain Injury -- TBI
Visual Impairments/Blindness -- BLD

Related Services Descriptors
Adapted Physical Education -- ADPE
Art Therapist -- ART
Audiologist -- AUD
Dance Therapist -- DNCE
Interpreter for the Deaf -- DFINT
Music Therapist -- MSIC
Occupational Therapist -- OT
Physical Therapist -- PT
Rehabilitation Counselor -- RHAB
School Counselor -- COUN
School Nurse -- NRS
School Psychologist -- PSYCH
School Social Worker -- SOCW
Speech-Language Pathologist -- SLPTH
Therapeutic Recreation -- TREC

Other Descriptors
Administration -- ADMIN
Bilingual Education -- BILING
Consulting/Collaboration -- CONS
Correctional Special Education -- CORR
Curriculum and Instruction -- CURRIN
Diagnostician -- DIAG
Elementary Special Education -- ELEM
Multicultural Concerns -- MCULT
Infant/Toddler Intervention -- INFT
Preschool Intervention -- PRES
Resource Teacher -- RES
Secondary Special Education -- SEC
Technology, Assistive -- ASTEC
Technology, Computer -- COTEC
Transition -- TRAN
Vocational Special Education -- VOC

Data in this fact sheet were provided by Institutes of Higher Education (IHEs) responding to Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) surveys, National Clearinghouse for Professions in Special Education (NCPSE) surveys and members of professional associations representing the related services. NCPSE maintains an electronic database of these data which is updated as new information becomes available. NCPSE makes no claim that this is a complete or comprehensive list.

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Teacher Educators and the Future of Personnel Preparation Programs for Serving Students with Visual Impairments

R.K. Silberman, A.L. Corn, V.M. Sowell

Abstract: This article reports the results of a survey of undergraduate and graduate personnel preparation programs for teachers, orientation and mobility instructors, and rehabilitation teachers of persons with visual impairments and of doctoral programs that prepare individuals for leadership positions.

The issues surrounding the preparation of personnel for children, youths, and adults with visual impairments are complex. Child counts, the number of personnel certified each year, the number of university programs distributed throughout the country that prepare personnel, and of funding these programs all contribute to the availability of certified direct-service personnel when a child or adult experiences a visual impairment. In the early 1980s, Tuttle and Heinze (1986) reported that teachers of children and youths with visual impairments were scarce. During the mid-1980s, the shortage of these teachers increased. In 1991, the most recent year in which data were collected, only 186 students enrolled in university programs to become orientation and mobility instructors (Wiener & Joffee, 1993), and in the 1993–94 academic year, according to data from the federal government, only 176 teachers of children and youths with visual impairments received certification (V. Hart, project officer, Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education, personal communication, October, 1994). To date, data have not been collected to ascertain the number of rehabilitation teachers needed to serve the increasing number of adults with visual impairments. Although the number of teachers needed for any group of children with special education needs is difficult to determine, many children and youths with visual impairments are either inadequately served or not served at all (Corn, Hatlen, Huebner, Ryan, & Siller, 1995).

Unfortunately, the reporting problems that were described in the 1989 report (Silberman, Corn, & Sowell, 1989) still exist. Students with visual impairments are often not identified in official counts because of wide variations among data systems with regard to types of data that are collected and because of state regulations that require students to be listed by their assumed primary disability (frequently mental retardation). Inaccuracies in counts are also evident in the *16th Annual report to Congress* (U.S. Department of Education, 1994, p. 25), which states that

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state data systems are not adequate to accurately project estimates of personnel demand, nor are systems in place to obtain information in personnel supply on a State-by-State basis. A recent pilot test of the data collection format revealed that collecting the required data was quite burdensome to States and school districts and that many States could not provide all of the requisite data. Data that are particularly problematic for the States to report are those related to staff retention and attrition and to the number of unfilled, funded positions at the local level. OSEP plans to continue working with constituent groups to identify important issues and develop strategies for obtaining accurate data on personnel supply and demand in special education.

The National Agenda for the Education of Children and Youths with Visual Impairments, Including Those with Multiple Disabilities (Corn et al., 1995) lists eight goal statements. It highlights priorities in the education of visually impaired children and was established through a likelihood-impact analysis involving over 500 professionals, parents, and persons with visual impairments. One of the goals is, "Universities, with a minimum of one full-time faculty member in the area of visual impairment, will prepare a sufficient number of educators of students with visual impairments to meet personnel needs throughout the country," a response to the need for a greater number of direct-service personnel for children and youths.

From the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s, well-established university programs in visual impairments reduced the number of tenure-track faculty or were considered at risk of closing, and this situation continues. For example, in 1992, the University of Texas at Austin employed two tenure-track faculty in the education of children and youths with visual impairments and one non-tenure-track faculty in the program to prepare O&M instructors. In 1995, no tenure-track faculty remained. An insufficient supply of teacher educators could soon have an impact on the number of persons available for direct service to individuals with disabilities and their families (Pierce, Smith, & Clarke, 1992). The dwindling number of university-based personnel preparation programs directly affects the availability of certified teachers, O&M instructors, and rehabilitation teachers. Furthermore, the number of graduate-level personnel preparation programs that prepare leadership personnel influences the number of faculty available for employment in university programs.

This article reports on the 1994–95 follow-up of the Silberman et al. (1989) study of university programs that prepare teachers of children and youths with visual impairments and those that prepare O&M instructors. In the follow-up study, we added university programs that prepare rehabilitation teachers to its original population. The data in this study refer to those types of undergraduate and graduate personnel preparation programs specific to the educational and rehabilitation needs of persons with visual impairments and to the doctoral programs that prepare individuals for leadership positions, including future university faculty in personnel preparation. As a result of this study, a profile of the programs and faculty that are responsible for training a suf-

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ficient number of professionals needed to provide direct services is now available to the field. With this information, federal, state, and university administrators may be better able to plan for personnel needs into the next century.

Method

In the fall of 1994, the authors sent survey questionnaires to 34 preparation programs for teachers of children and youths with visual impairment, O&M instructors, and rehabilitation teachers that are listed in the *AFB Directory of Services* (American Foundation for the Blind, 1993), as well as to programs that the authors knew of that were not listed in the directory. Thirty-two programs responded to the deadline. (This number represents 69 of the 71 full-time faculty members in the field.) The coordinator of each program was asked to distribute the questionnaires to all full-time faculty whose primary responsibility was in one or more of the three programs under consideration. Although many programs function with part-time and adjunct personnel, we determined that only full-time faculty (at any academic rank, from non-tenure-track instructors to tenured full professors) represent stability and commitment to an established program.

The respondents returned the questionnaires by mail or fax. The data were analyzed at Hunter College of the City University of New York (CUNY).

Results

Demographic Data

Sixty-nine full-time faculty members from 32 universities in 20 states responded to the survey (a response rate of 99%). An additional questionnaire was returned after the data were analyzed and hence was not included. Of the respondents, 42 (60.9%) were women and 27 (39.1%) were men. All but six were Caucasian (91.3%), 2 (2.9%) were African American, and 4 (5.8%) were Asian American. Four respondents (5.8%) had visual impairments. Thirty-four respondents were aged 40–49, 20 (29.0%) were aged 50–59, 2 (2.9%) were aged 60 and over, and 1 (1.4%) was under 30.

It was not possible to determine the number of faculty in each type of program for two reasons. First, faculty are often assigned to teach courses that apply to more than one program. For example, a faculty member in a college with both a teacher education program and a program to prepare O&M instructors may teach a course on low vision that students in both programs are required to take. Second, several faculty members indicated they had responsibilities in more than one program. Therefore, one cannot assume that the 69 respondents are equally distributed among the three types of programs.

An open-ended question asked for what percentage of time the respondents had responsibilities in each area. With regard to the field of visual impairments, only 28 (41%) of the respondents spent their entire time in one specialization area: 17 (24.6%) in preparing teachers of children and youths, 9 (13.0%) in preparing O&M instructors, and 3 (4.3%) in preparing rehabilitation teachers. Furthermore, 14 respondents spent 50 percent or more of their time in disability areas other than visual impairments.

For the 52 respondents (75.4%) who spent a proportion of their time preparing teachers of children and youth with visual impairments, the sum of the percentages of time they spent was equivalent to 31.6

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full-time faculty. In addition to the 17 (24.6%) mentioned earlier who spent 100 percent of their time in this area, 35 spent various proportions of time: 5 (9.6%) spent 76–99 percent of their time, 5 (9.6%) spent 51–75 percent, 9 (17.3%) spent 26–50 percent, and 16 (30.7%) spent 25 percent or less of their time.

Of the 32 respondents who spent a percentage of their time preparing O&M instructors, the sum of the percentages of time they spent was equal to 19.2 full-time faculty. In addition to the 9 (13.0%) mentioned earlier who spent 100 percent of their time in this area, 23 spent various proportions of time; 7 (21.9%) spent 51–75 percent of their time; 7 (21.9%) spent 26–50 percent; and 9 (28.1%) spent 25 percent or less of their time.

Finally, of the 21 respondents who spent a proportion of their time preparing rehabilitation teachers, the sum of the percentages of time they spent was equivalent to 8 full-time faculty members. As was mentioned before, only 3 percent spent 100 percent of their time in this area; in addition, 2 (9.5%) of the remaining 18 spent 51–92 percent of their time, 3 (14.3%) spent 25–50 percent, and 13 (61.9%) spent less than 25 percent of their time. In summary, although 69 faculty members responded to the survey as full-time university employees in this field, the percentage of time they are actually allocated for preparing personnel to work in the field of visual impairments is equivalent to only 58.8 full-time faculty members.

Rank, Status, Vacancies, and Salaries

The responses to the questions on academic rank and status revealed that 18 (26.1%) respondents were full professors, 22 (31.9%) were associate professors, and 19 (27.5%) were assistant professors. An additional 6 (8.7%) were lecturers or instructors, and 4 (5.8%) checked "other," a category that included postdoctoral fellow, grant project coordinator, and practicum coordinator.

Further analysis of rank in relation to gender revealed that there were an equal number of males and females at both the associate professor and full professor ranks but that 15 of the 19 respondents (79.0%) of the assistant professor rank and 4 of the 6 respondents (66.7%) at the instructor-lecturer ranks were female. Thus, at the junior academic ranks, a substantial proportion of the faculty are female.

Of the 69 respondents, 39 (56.5%) had tenure at the time of the survey. Of the 31 (44.9%) who did not have tenure, 10 (14.5% of the total respondents) were on a tenure track. Thus, 20 respondents (29.0%), were not tenured or on a tenure track, which means that nearly one-third of the full-time university faculty do not have tenure or tenure-track positions.

Fifty-nine (85.5%) of the 69 respondents stated that they planned to remain in personnel preparation for at least the next five years. Only 5 (7.2%) of the faculty planned to retire or leave the field within five years, and another 5 (7.2%) said they did not know their plans at that time. Regardless of whether they had plans to leave their current position within the next five years, the respondents were asked if they would be replaced if they left. Twenty-one respondents (30.4%) indicated they would definitely be replaced, and 5 (7.2%) anticipated that they would not. Of particular concern is that the remaining 43 respondents (62.3%) stated they did not know if they would be replaced.

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At the time of the data analysis in late spring 1995, only two universities were each in the process of hiring one full-time faculty member in visual impairments for the 1995–96 academic year to replace faculty who had resigned. One position was in O&M, and the other positions required shared responsibilities in O&M and in education of children and youths. To date, no persons who received a doctoral degree in 1995 had applied for either position.

A broad range of salaries were reported for the academic year 1994–95. The majority of the respondents (50, or 72.5%) earned $30,000–$49,999: 25 respondents (36.25%) earned $30,000–$39,999, and 25 (36.25%) earned $40,000–$49,999. In addition, 5 respondents (7.2%) earned below $30,000 (2 of them earning below $20,000), 5 (7.2%) earned $50,000–$59,999, 6 (8.7%) earned $60,000–$69,999, and 3 (4.3%) earned more than $70,000.

With regard to the sources of their salaries, 44 (63.8%) of the respondents reported that their salaries came only from hard-money sources, whereas 18 (26.1%) reported that their salaries were totally funded by grants or other sources and 7 (10.1%) reported that at least a portion of their salaries were funded by soft-money sources. Therefore, the salaries of 36.3 percent of the full-time faculty are partially or entirely funded by grants.

Further analysis of the data revealed the sources of the salaries of the tenured, tenure-track, and nontenured faculty. Of the 40 tenured respondents, 34 (85.0%) were paid entirely from hard-money sources, 3 (7.5%) were paid from a mixture of hard- and soft-money sources, and 3 (7.5%) were paid totally form soft-money sources. Of the 10 respondents in tenure-track positions, 9 (90.0%) were paid from hard-money sources and 1 (10.0%) was paid from a mixture of hard- and soft-money sources. Of the 20 respondents who were not on a tenure track, 3 (15.0%) were paid solely from hard-money sources, 3 (15.0%) were paid from a mixture of hard- and soft-money sources, and 14 (70.0%) were paid entirely from soft-money sources.

External funding sources

With regard to external sources of funding, in 1994–95, more than half (18, or 54.5%) the university programs received full or partial support (in the form of grants) from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, and 10 (30.3%) obtained such support from the department's Rehabilitation Services Administration. In addition, 4 universities (12.1%) were awarded training grants from their states, and 5 (15.2%) received grants from other sources, such as private foundations.

Types of programs

Of the programs in the 32 universities and colleges surveyed in 1994–95, 27 were at public institutions and 5 were at private schools (four colleges of education and one college of optometry). As was mentioned earlier, these 32 universities were in only 20 states.

Table 1 summarizes the number and types of programs identified in the survey, categorized by various geographical regions of the country established for the deaf-blind initiatives. As the table indicates, three regions (the Northeast, Northwest, and Southwest) each have only three universities with programs to prepare personnel for direct service to children and youths with visual impairments. In one

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Table 1
Distribution of faculty and programs by region.

Institution by region	Number of respondents	Type of program*		
		Education of children and youths	O&M	Rehabilitation teaching
Northeast region				
Boston College	1	M	—	—
Fitchburg State College	1	U	—	—
University of Massachusetts, Boston	1	—	C, M	C, M
Midatlantic region				
Dominican College	1	U, C	—	U
Hunter College, CUNY	1	M	—	M
Kutztown State University	1	U	—	—
Pennsylvania College of Optometry**	4	C, M	C, M	C, M
Teacher's College, Columbia University	1	C, M, D	—	—
University of Pittsburgh	1	C, M, D	C, M, D	—
Southeast region				
Florida State University	3	U, C, M, D	U, C, M, D	U, C, M, D
Georgia State University	1	C, M	—	—
Peabody College, Vanderbilt University***	2	U, M, D	M, D	M, D
University of Louisville	1	U, C, M, D	—	—
University of New Orleans	1	C, M, D	—	—
University of South Carolina **	1	C, M	—	M
Midwest region				
Eastern Michigan University	1	U, C, M	—	—
Illinois State University	1	U, C, M, D	—	—
Michigan State University	3	C, M	C, M	—
Ohio State University	1	C, M	—	—
Northern Illinois University	4	U, M	—	—
University of Minnesota	1	C, M, D	—	—
Western Michigan University	8	U	C, M	M
SouthCentral region				
Stephen Austin State University	3	U, C	U, C	—
Texas Tech University	4	C, M, D	M, D	—
University of Arkansas, Little Rock	5	C, M	C, M	C, M
University of Texas at Austin	1	C, M, D	M, D	—
Southwest region				
California State University, Los Angeles	3	C,M,D	M,D	U
San Francisco State University***	2	C,M,D	C,M,D	C,M,D
University of Arizona, Tucson	3	M,D	M,D	—
Northwest region				
Portland State University	2	C,M	M	—
University of North Dakota	1	C,M	—	—
University of Northern Colorado ****	5	C,M,D	C,M,D	M

*U = undergraduate program, C = certification program, M = master's degree program, and D = doctoral program.

**Unfilled vacancy as of July 1995.

***One faculty member retired or resigned; was not replaced for 1994–95.

****Vacancy filled as of July 1995.

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region (South-central) there are four universities, in two regions (Midatlantic and Southeast) there are six universities each, and in one region (Midwest) there are seven universities. However, it should be noted that the number of universities in a region does not accurately reflect students' access to the three types of programs and, more significantly, there are wide geographic distances among the universities, even in the same state. In Texas, for example, although there are three universities with O&M programs, Texas Tech University is 400 miles from the University of Texas at Austin and about 700 miles from Stephen F. Austin University in Nagodoches.

Table 1 presents data on the four levels of personnel preparation programs (undergraduate, certification, master's degree, and doctorate) offered by the universities. As the table shows, many universities had programs at more than one level of instruction; for example, Florida State University offered all four levels in all three areas, San Francisco State University offered three levels (certification, master's degree, and doctorate) in all three areas, and Pennsylvania College of Optometry offered two levels (certification and master's degree) at all three levels.

Among the undergraduate programs, 12 prepared teachers of children and youths with visual impairments, 2 prepared O&M instructors, and 3 prepared rehabilitation teachers. With regard to certification programs (nondegree programs on the post-bachelor's level), those for education of children and youths with visual impairments met the states' requirements for certification, but those in O&M and rehabilitation teaching generally met the requirements of the Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired for national certification. As Table 1 indicates, there were 23 programs that certify teachers of children and youths with visual impairments, 10 that certify O&M instructors, and 5 that certify rehabilitation teachers.

Among the schools that offer master's degree programs, 26 universities offered programs in education of children and youths with visual impairment; 15, in O&M; and 10, in rehabilitation teaching. Finally, 14 universities offered doctoral programs in special education with an emphasis in children and youths with visual impairments, 9 offered programs with an emphasis in O&M, and 3 offered programs with an emphasis in rehabilitation teaching.

Implications

An earlier study of personnel preparation programs (Silberman et al., 1989) predicted that "the future of programs to train personnel to serve visually handicapped children and youths is guarded" (p. 154). The data from the 1994–95 study indicate that the future of these programs in this field continues to be threatened. Cutbacks in states' basic support to universities and conflicts between human service needs and balanced budget initiatives may result in fewer services to low-incidence populations, such as persons who are visually impaired, and fewer personnel to provide such services.

Because 22 of the 69 university faculty who were surveyed are over age 50 and 43 of the 69 did not know whether their positions would be retained if they resign and another 5 said they would definitely not be replaced, the future of a significant number of programs will be in question

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when these faculty retire or otherwise resign. Moreover, since 20 of the 69 faculty are not in tenure-track positions, they could be laid off for financial reasons, especially given the threats to further cutbacks in federal funds for educational programs, much of which goes to the salaries of non-tenure-track faculty who provide class instruction. The loss of these faculty would severely constrict personnel preparation programs in the field.

The fact that only 20 of the 50 states have personnel preparation programs in visual impairment reflects the difficulties that interested persons encounter in obtaining training in the field. Constraints imposed by the limited number of schools and the vast geographic distances among schools make it difficult or impossible for students to enroll.

The recruitment of faculty continues to be a serious issue. The lack of stability in the current and future university job market, higher salaries in administrative positions, and the absence of financial support for doctoral study have led to a dearth of potential leadership personnel. Furthermore, the median salary range at the assistant professor level ($30,000–$40,000) is less than that for personnel in direct services, who do not incur the added expense and disruption of their lives caused by doctoral study. The fact that there has been only a small increase in the number of faculty from underrepresented populations since 1989 (from none to six) is a major cause for concern because many infants with visual impairments are from ethnic minority populations, and hence, a greater number of ethnic minority students will require services in the field of visual impairments within the next 10 years.

Recommendations

University programs that prepare personnel for direct services to persons with visual impairments must address issues related to the provision of high-quality services and the optimum use of available resources. Accordingly, we make the following recommendations that are based on the results of this study.

- University personnel should make every effort to stress the importance of continued institutional support for the missions and personnel of these programs. Furthermore, state education and rehabilitation departments must take the lead in providing financial support to existing programs. They should also assist Local Education Agencies (LEAs) in providing incentives (such as stipends, release time, and job security) to teachers in related fields for obtaining certification in visual impairment.

  Integral to this approach is the need for reciprocal agreements among the states to accept the credentials of all accredited programs, so that graduates can be certified to teach in any state. Moreover, it is imperative for the federal government to recognize the long-term expertise and commitment of well-established university programs and thus to involve experienced faculty in developing creative and innovative methods of preparing a sufficient number of direct services personnel. Of particular concern to those who are responsible for these programs is the possibility that new programs of questionable quality will proliferate as a result of federal support that is based on geographic needs.

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- Universities must recognize the necessity of supporting this low-incidence field by appointing faculty members to tenure-track positions with sufficient compensation.
- Efforts to address the shortage of personnel preparation faculty in this field should include the development by existing programs of distance-learning (outreach) courses, interactive video systems, mentor teachers, and other specific curricular models. However, we question the viability of short-term solutions to certification requirements through summers-only programs and alternative training in nonuniversity programs.
- Because the foregoing programs require the allocation of much more time and resources by individual faculty members than are required in traditional personnel preparation programs, the demands on faculty should be recognized by university reviews of faculty for tenure promotion.
- Faculty in personnel preparation programs should encourage colleagues in related fields to enter master's and doctoral programs in special education, to expand the cadre of personnel who can assume positions in the universities in both education and rehabilitation. Furthermore, individuals with specialized undergraduate or graduate preparation in education or rehabilitation of persons with visual impairment who obtain doctoral degrees in related fields should be recruited to leadership positions in the field.
- Leaders should encourage successful service providers in the field to develop the necessary skills and knowledge to assume future leadership positions.

Conclusion

The mandate of federal legislation and education and rehabilitation require the delivery of appropriate, high-quality specialized services to children, youths, and adults with visual impairments. These mandates can be fulfilled only if teachers become certified by acquiring the necessary specialized skills in high-quality accredited university programs. Collaboration among LEAs, state departments of education and rehabilitation, and the federal government is essential to ensure that such high-cost, low-enrollment categorical university programs in the field of visual impairments can continue to train personnel to meet the unique needs of this low-incidence population. It is imperative that all those who affect the lives of individuals with visual impairments are committed advocates for the civil rights of this population; paramount to this effort is the assurance that existing high-quality university programs will remain viable.

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APPENDIX C

Handouts from Presentations

What We Know About Teacher Preparation Programs in Blindness and Visual Impairment

prepared by
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for the NASDSE Policy Forum,
Training Educators to Work with Students who are Blind or Visually Impaired
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Program Status

Figure 1

Only 26 programs in 19 states across the country currently meet AER Division 17's standard of at least 1.0 faculty FTE.

- Sixteen (16) of these programs receive funding from the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP).
- Twelve (12) of these programs prepare graduates eligible for dual teacher/orientation and mobility (O&M) certification.
- The total of 47 programs listed in the National Clearinghouse for Professions in Special Education list is a myth.

In 1994, only 17 faculty members were actually employed full-time in the teacher education program in blindness and visual impairment.

- The last new faculty position filled in a university program was in 1995, after searching for four years for a qualified doctoral-level applicant.
- The last new tenure track position established in blindness and visual impairment occurred over 10 years ago.

Since 1980, programs have closed at the following universities:

Boston College (O&M only)
Brigham Young University
Fitchburg State College
Hunter College (O&M only)
Peabody College at Vanderbilt University (O&M only)
Sacramento State University
San Diego State University
State University of New York at Geneseo
Syracuse University

Temple University
The Johns Hopkins University
University of Virginia
University of Michigan
University of South Carolina [but recruiting for next year].

Programs currently at risk include:

University of Texas at Austin
D'Youville College
Teachers College, Columbia University
Portland State University
Peabody College at Vanderbilt University

During this same time period, only the Pennsylvania College of Optometry has opened and continues to operate a teacher education program in blindness and visual impairment.

Sixty-two percent (62%) of university faculty in teacher preparation, O&M, and rehabilitation teaching do not believe their positions will be maintained after they retire (Silberman, Corn, & Sowell, 1996).

Numbers of Children with Visual Impairments

Figure 2

The annual count of children with visual impairments served under IDEA for the 1993-94 school year comprised only 46.5% of the Federal Quota Registration maintained by the American Printing House for the Blind (APH).

- Although this undercount occurred in all states, the discrepancy is largest in states west of the Mississippi River.
  - ⇒ 33 states, mostly in the West and Southeast, are expected to experience increases in elementary and secondary school enrollments of 5% to 10% and more.

Figure 3

- Federal quota registration requires legal blindness for eligibility, a more restrictive requirement than IDEA's requirement for a visual impairment that affects the ability to learn. Yet the annual count of students with visual impairment served under IDEA has totaled less than the federal quota registration since 1977.

Figure 4

For years, the field has relied on the federal estimate of the population of children with visual impairments -- one-tenth of one percent of the resident school-age population -- first articulated by Jones and Collins (1966). Nelson and Dimitrova (1993) estimated that .2% (two-tenths of

one percent) of children and youths under 18 years of age are severely visually impaired. This rate seems to be supported by Wenger, Kaye, and LaPlante (1996). Benson and Marano (1994), however, suggest the prevalence rate may be as high as 1%.

- IDEA's count may fail to account for over 80% of students with severe visual impairment.
- Even APH's registry may fail to account for over 60% of students with severe visual impairment.
- A Colorado study suggests that teachers and O&M specialists actually serve three times more students than are reported as visually impaired under IDEA (Ferrell & Suvak, 1996). These students are classified with a disability other than visual impairment.

Program Productivity

Figure 5

In a survey conducted for Goal 3 of the National Agenda, the total number of students enrolled in university programs of various types in 1995-96 was 960 students, 415 (43.2%) of whom completed the requirements and presumably entered the field.

Figure 6

Student enrollments and teacher yields varied from state to state. States with the highest enrollments (≥ 50) were Arkansas, California, Florida, Michigan, Nebraska, Pennsylvania, and Texas. States that produced the greatest number of teachers (≥ 25) were California, Florida, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Texas.

Figure 7

- The 33 universities in 22 states responding to the survey produced 274 new teachers of students with visual impairments – a mean of 8.3 per program, and a national mean of 5.5 per state.
  - ⇒ OSEP reported that 241 teachers of students with visual impairment were needed during school year 1992-93 (OSEP, 1995).
  - ⇒ These numbers do not appear to have changed much from the Bowen and Klass (1993) survey, although the methods of data collection and definitions used do not necessarily make the surveys comparable.

Figure 8

- Fifteen programs produced 94 new orientation and mobility specialists – a mean of 6.3 per program, and a national mean of 1.9 per state.

- Thirteen programs produced 43 new dually-certified teachers/O&M specialists -- a mean of 3.3 per program, and a national mean of .9 per state.
- Five programs produced only 1 new teacher of students with deafblindness -- a mean of .2 per program.

In 1995-96, students enrolled in the blindness and visual impairment program at Vanderbilt University were taught by faculty for only 25% of their courses; their remaining coursework was covered by adjuncts.

- Students at the University of Pittsburgh had the same experience.
- Students at the University of Northern Colorado were taught by faculty for 100% of their courses, but only because there were six faculty (3 state-funded, 3 made possible by federal grants). Without grant support, UNC, too, would need to rely on adjuncts to teach all the courses required for Colorado licensure (47 credits required for Colorado licensure in Severe Needs: Vision; 63 credits for licensure in Severe Needs: Vision with endorsement in orientation and mobility.

Figure 9

The cost of producing one student credit hour in the Division of Special Education at UNC is $174.

- In-state tuition covers only 72.4% of this cost, although out-of-state tuition covers 286.2%. With UNC's recent designation as a Western Regional Graduate Program, however, almost all of its students will pay the in-state tuition rate.

Figure 10

Tuition contributed only 18.4% of the mean revenues received at all public institutions in 1993-94, while the costs of instruction alone (not including other types of academic support, such as technology laboratories and libraries) accounted for 32.6% of public institutions' mean expenditures.

Only 30.3% of parents who sent their children to residential school for students with visual impairments could reply with certainty that their home school district employed a teacher of students with visual impairment (Corn, Bina, & DePriest, 1995). Even less could respond that their home school district employed an O&M specialist.

Student Costs

Estimated annual budgets for UNC graduate students ranged in 1995-96 from $8202 for state residents commuting to UNC, to $17,786 for out-of-state students living on campus.

- The national mean student budget in 1992-93 ranged from $13,300 for full-time, 12-month masters students at public universities, to $26,300 for full-time, 12-month doctoral students at private universities.
- By the time they completed their degrees, masters graduates in 1992-93 had borrowed a national mean of $11,870 in loans; doctoral graduates had borrowed a national mean of $21,189 in loans.

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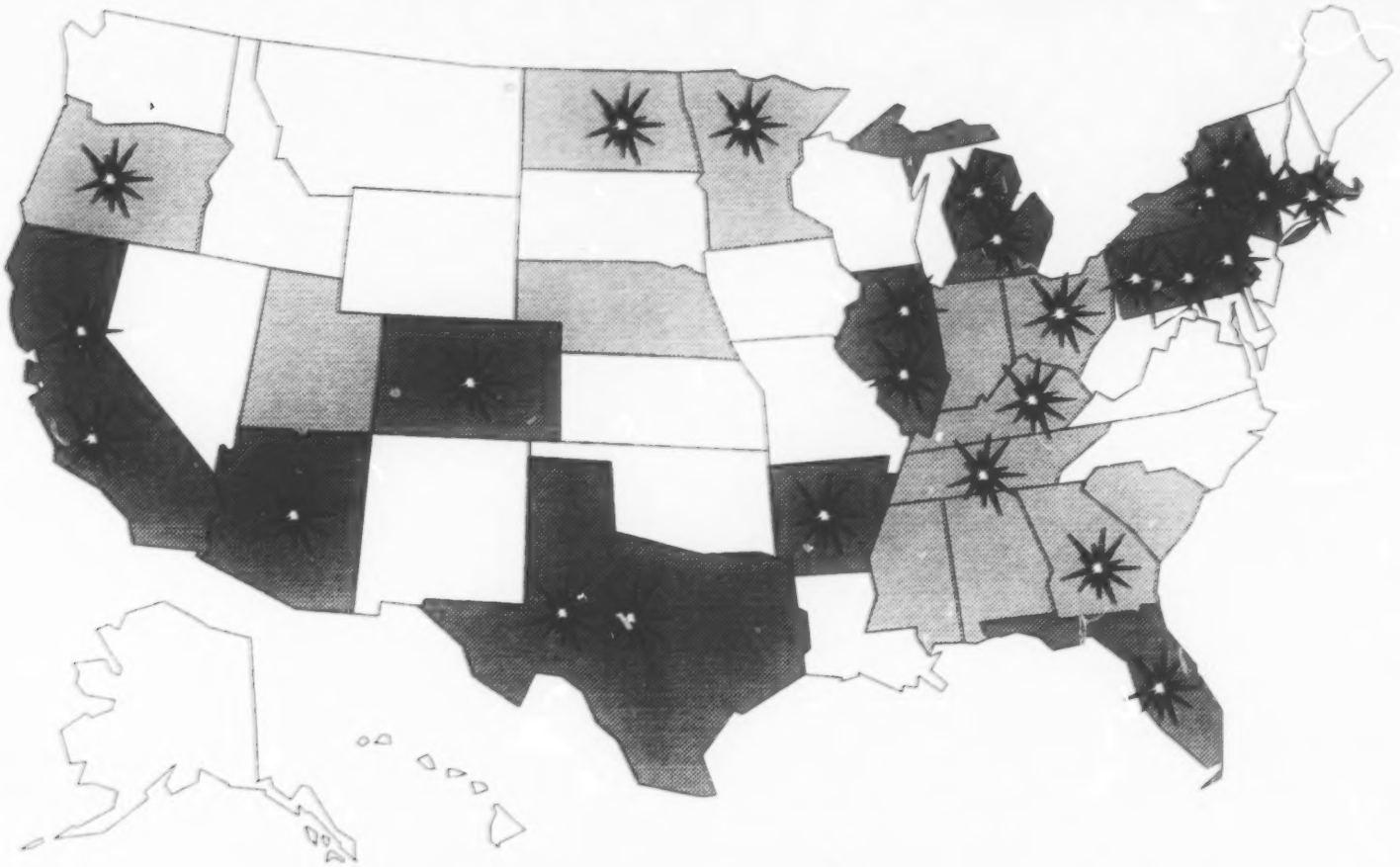
University Programs in Blindness



Program that currently meets AER standards for teacher preparation programs

Program for teacher of students with VI

Program for dual O&M and teacher of students with VI

Figure 1

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Comparison of APH Census, OSEP Annual Count, Resident Population of Children, and Estimated Prevalence Rates, by State

State	1994 APH Census	1993-94 OSEP	OSEP as Percent of APH Count	Estimated Resident Population 3-21 (1993-94)	Estimated @ .1%	Estimated @ .2% (Nelson & Dimitrova, 1993)	Estimated @ 1%	% in separate, public, or private residential
	(APH, 1994)	(OSEP, 1995)	(col. 3/col. 2)	(OSEP, 1995)	(Jones & Collins, 1986)	(Wenger, Kaye, & LaPlante, 1996)	(Benson & Marano, 1994)	(OSEP, 1995)
Alabama	907	436	48.07%	1150796	1151	2302	11508	30.99
Alaska	137	43	31.39%	190048	190	380	1900	0
American Samoa	12	2	16.67%		0	0	0	0
Arizona	837	408	48.75%	1087540	1088	2175	10875	24.02
Arkansas	653	181	27.72%	676241	676	1352	6762	54.69
California	6261	3129	49.98%	8494967	8495	16990	84950	5.09
Colorado	688	304	44.19%	968237	968	1936	9682	9.96
Connecticut	980	464	47.35%	793603	794	1587	7936	16.35
Delaware	151	92	60.93%	179541	180	359	1795	12.12
District of Columbia	129	39	30.23%	119587	120	239	1196	41.03
Florida	1644	1127	68.55%	3245308	3245	6491	32453	28.63
Georgia	967	513	53.05%	1927741	1928	3855	19277	24.13
Guam	21	15	71.43%		0	0	0	0
Hawaii	115	64	55.65%	308221	308	616	3082	5.08
Idaho	282	79	28.01%	350546	351	701	3505	0
Illinois	3662	1070	29.22%	3151782	3152	6304	31518	10.58
Indiana	1016	592	58.27%	1564553	1565	3129	15646	29.43
Iowa	429	184	42.89%	776089	776	1552	7761	29.35
Kansas	538	193	35.87%	713268	713	1427	7133	10.8
Kentucky	781	481	61.59%	1044565	1045	2089	10446	26.88
Louisiana	716	461	64.39%	1297078	1297	2594	12971	11.29
Maine	262	91	34.73%	328943	329	658	3289	1.02
Maryland	1172	469	40.02%	1263030	1263	2526	12630	31.75
Massachusetts	1353	588	43.46%	1442646	1443	2885	14426	7.97
Michigan	2227	819	36.78%	2634648	2635	5269	26346	3.83
Minnesota	943	352	37.33%	1267385	1267	2535	12674	19.26
Mississippi	243	214	88.07%	806983	807	1614	8070	26.67
Missouri	1018	369	36.25%	1424982	1425	2850	14250	18.5
Montana	178	80	44.94%	244597	245	489	2446	4.17
Nebraska	325	208	64.00%	462186	462	924	4622	12.83
Nevada	173	90	52.02%	351039	351	702	3510	2.27
New Hampshire	155	91	58.71%	295373	295	591	2954	79.63
New Jersey	1615	346	21.42%	1938259	1938	3877	19383	7.44
New Mexico	532	146	27.44%	491856	492	984	4919	25.49
New York	4500	1651	36.69%	4579146	4579	9158	45791	17.49
North Carolina	1150	611	53.13%	1807451	1807	3615	18075	11.77
North Dakota	246	54	21.95%	183212	183	366	1832	5.26
Ohio	1498	978	65.29%	2992418	2992	5985	29924	15.15
Oklahoma	377	294	77.98%	918744	919	1837	9187	23.69
Oregon	716	542	75.70%	813502	814	1627	8135	11.91
Pennsylvania	2030	1322	65.12%	3017814	3018	6036	30178	19.75
Puerto Rico	595	619	104.03%		0	0	0	1.63
Rhode Island	191	78	40.84%	244380	244	489	2444	7.89
South Carolina	1164	384	32.99%	1012933	1013	2026	10129	11.37
South Dakota	159	67	42.14%	216254	216	433	2163	23.29
Tennessee	980	849	86.63%	1346819	1347	2694	13468	2.18
Texas	4146	1959	47.25%	5315955	5316	10632	53160	9.35
Utah	641	332	51.79%	690260	690	1381	6903	24.59
Vermont	84	36	42.86%	154007	154	308	1540	3.33
Virgin Islands	32	2	6.25%		0	0	0	0
Virginia	1248	501	40.14%	1674928	1675	3350	16749	13.52
Washington	1164	327	28.09%	1431406	1431	2863	14314	12.64
West Virginia	387	223	57.62%	482975	483	966	4830	36.5
Wisconsin	1032	272	26.36%	1407063	1407	2814	14071	14.85
Wyoming	114	51	44.74%	147632	148	295	1476	3.17
						0	0	
Total	53576	24892	46.46%	69428517	69429	138857	694285	16.01
OSEP 93-94 as % of erp				0.04%				
APH 93-94 as % of erp				0.08%				

Figure 2

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Comparison of APH & OSEP Annual Counts

(since passage of PL 94-142)

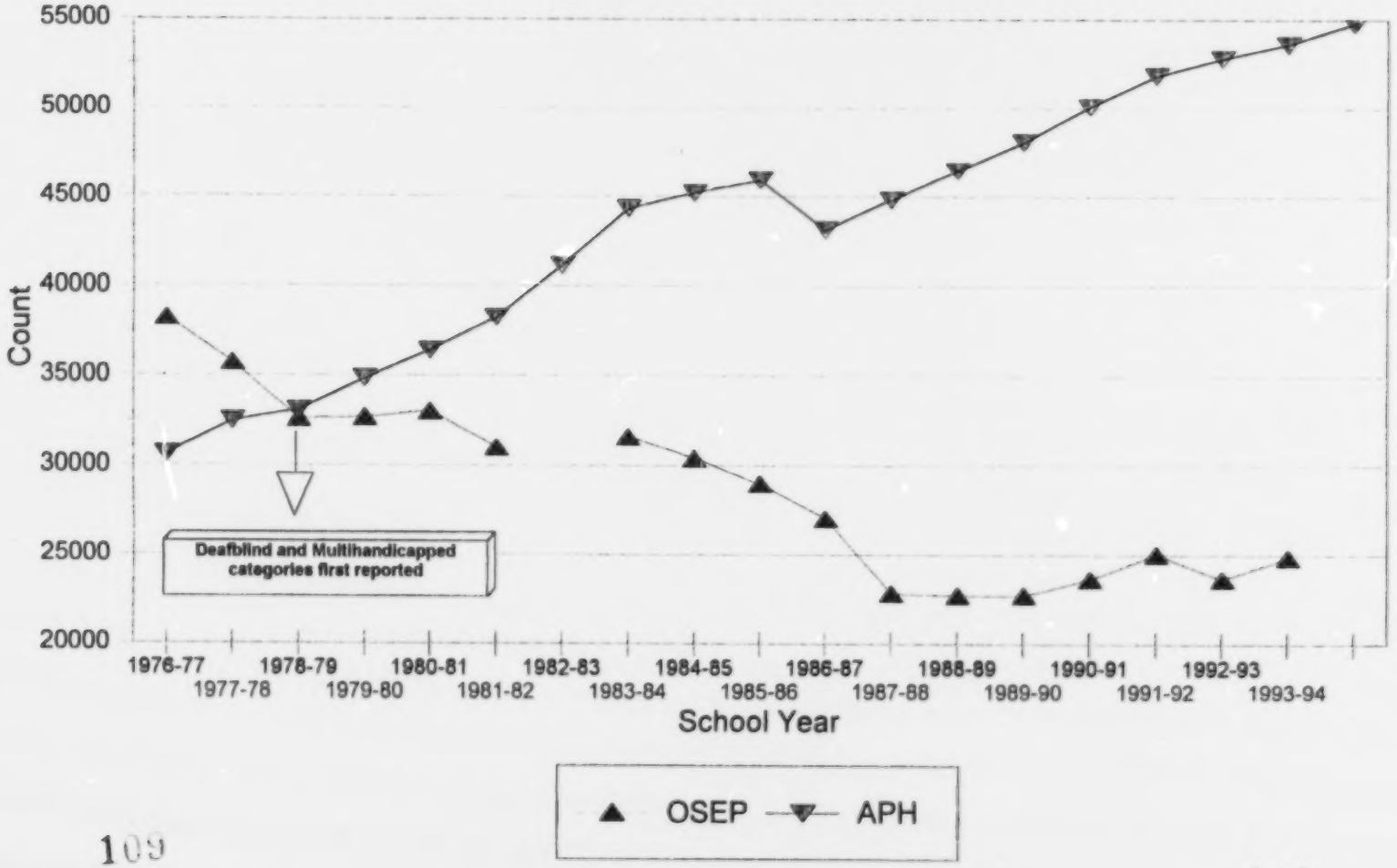


Figure 3

Children with Visual Impairments

(Annual counts vs. prevalence rates)

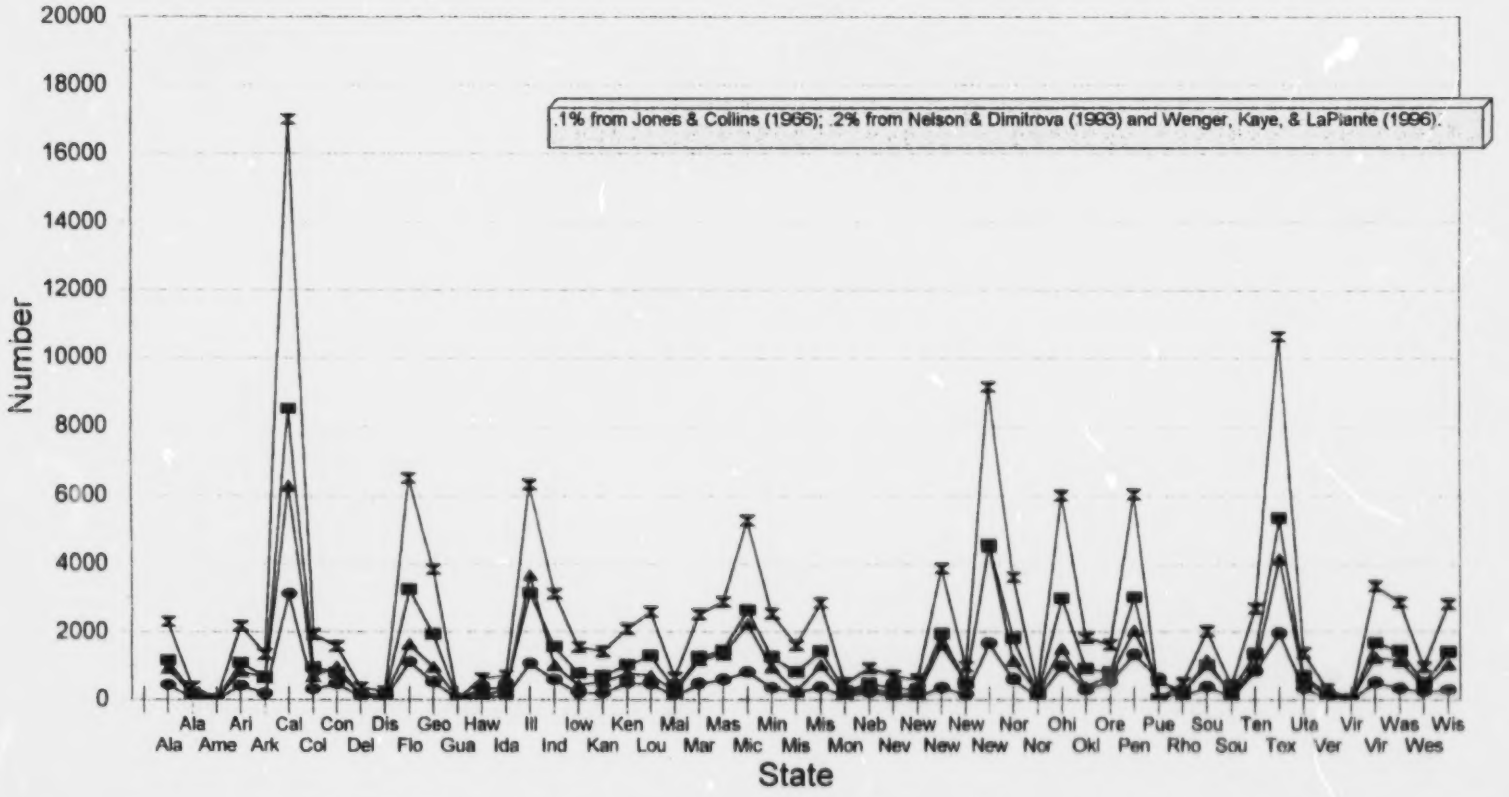

20000
18000
16000
14000
12000
10000
8000
6000
4000
2000
0
Number
.1% from Jones & Collins (1966); .2% from Nelson & Dimitrova (1993) and Wenger, Kaye, & LaPlante (1996).
Ala Ari Cal Con Dis Geo Haw Ill Iow Ken Mai Mas Min Mis Neb New New New Nor Ohi Ore Pue Sou Ten Uta Vir Was Wis
Ala Ame Ark Col Del Flo Gua Ida Ind Kan Lou Mar Mic Mis Mon Nev New New Nor Okl Pen Rho Sou Tex Ver Vir Wes
State
1993-94 OSEP
1994 APH Census
Estimated @ .1%
Estimated @ .2%

Figure 4

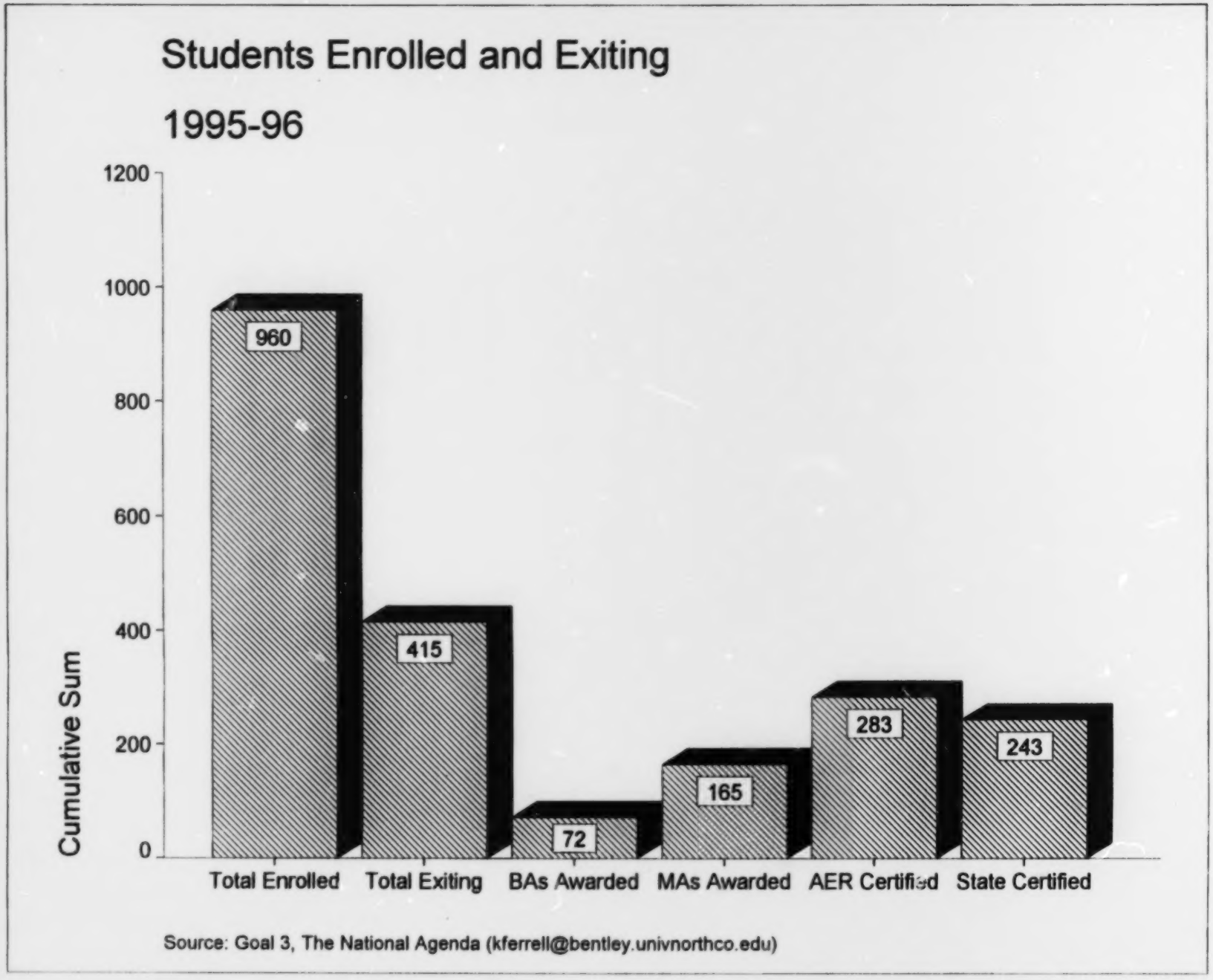

Students Enrolled and Exiting
1995-96
Cumulative Sum
1200
1000
800
600
400
200
0
960
415
72
165
283
243
Total Enrolled
Total Exiting
BAs Awarded
MAs Awarded
AER Certified
State Certified
Source: Goal 3, The National Agenda (kferrell@bentley.univnorthco.edu)

Figure 5

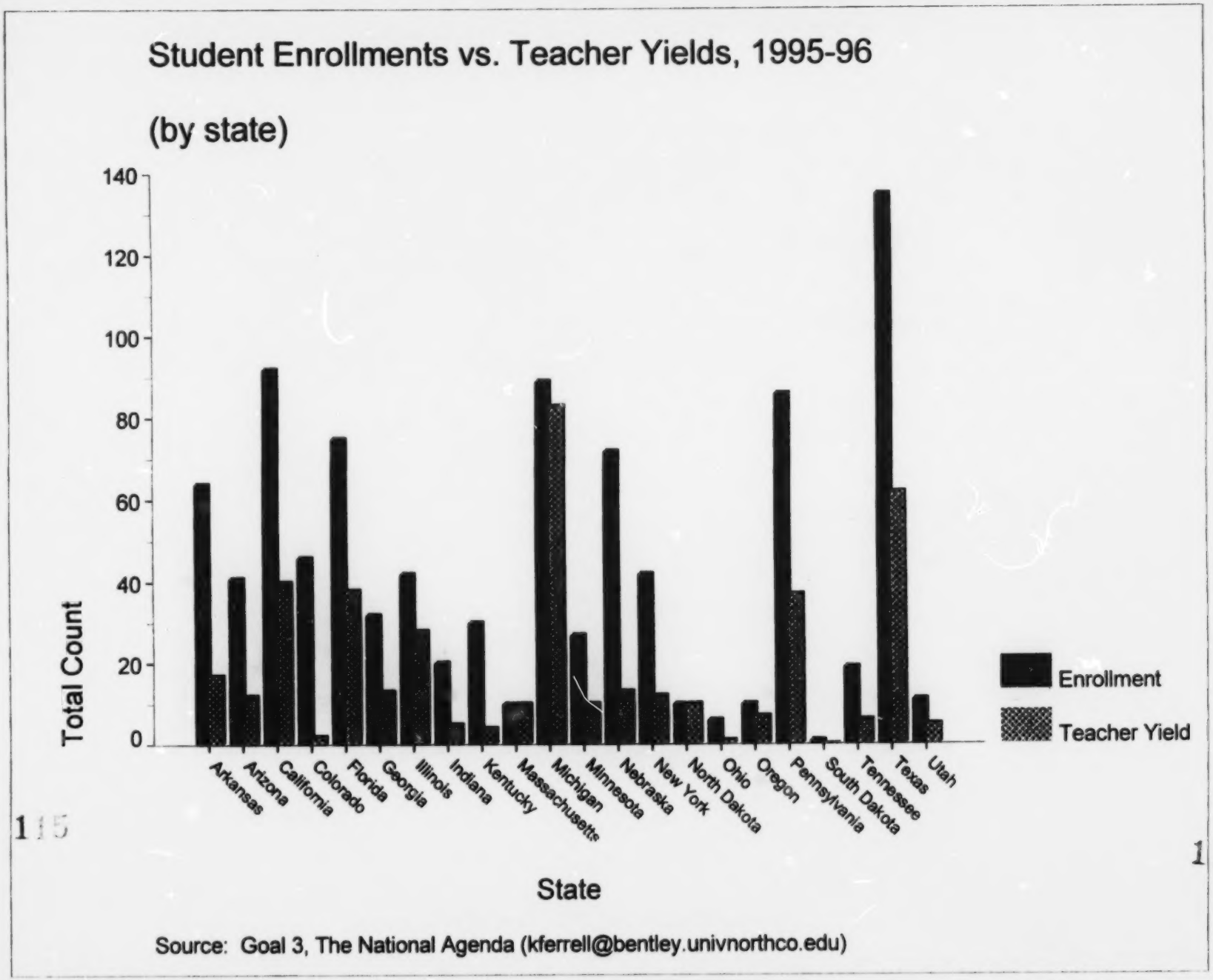
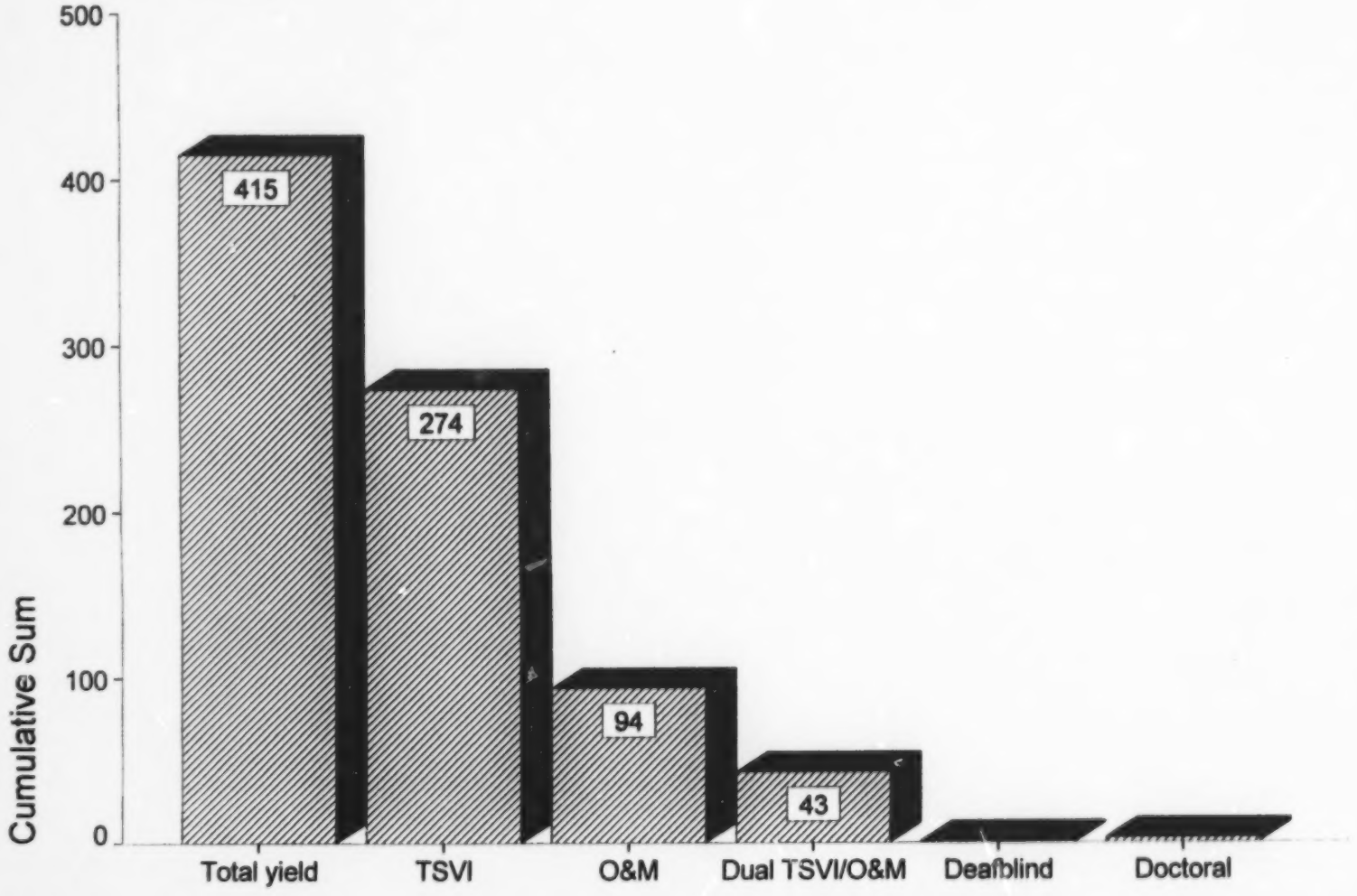

Student Enrollments vs. Teacher Yields, 1995-96
(by state)
Total Count
140
120
100
80
60
40
20
0
Arkansas
Arizona
California
Colorado
Florida
Georgia
Illinois
Indiana
Kentucky
Massachusetts
Michigan
Minnesota
Nebraska
New York
North Dakota
Ohio
Oregon
Pennsylvania
South Dakota
Tennessee
Texas
Utah
State
Enrollment
Teacher Yield
Source: Goal 3, The National Agenda (kferrell@bentley.univnorthco.edu)

Figure 6

Teacher Yield by Teacher Types

1995-96



Source: Goal 3, The National Agenda (kferrell@bentley.univnorthco.edu)

Figure 7

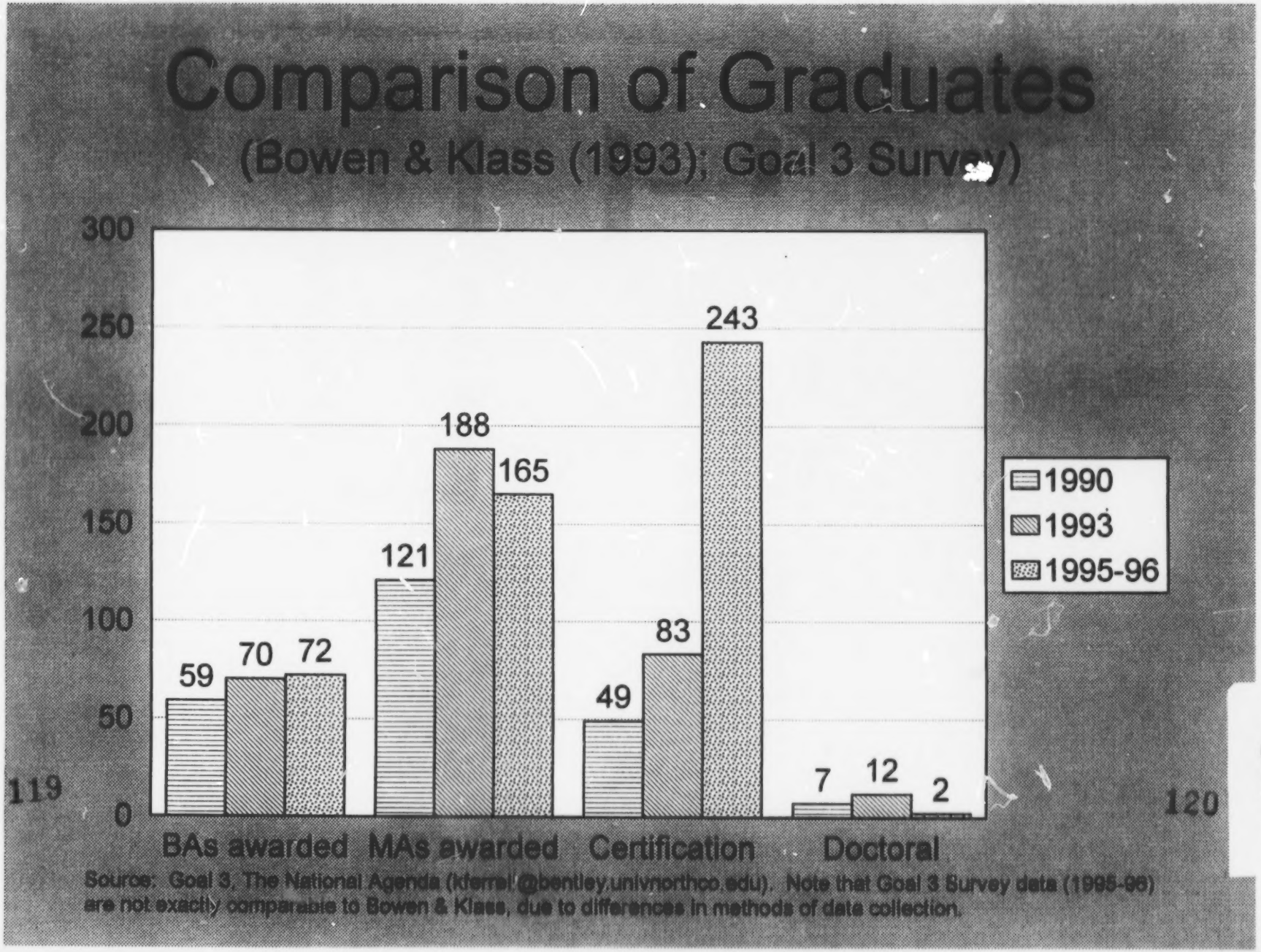


Figure 8

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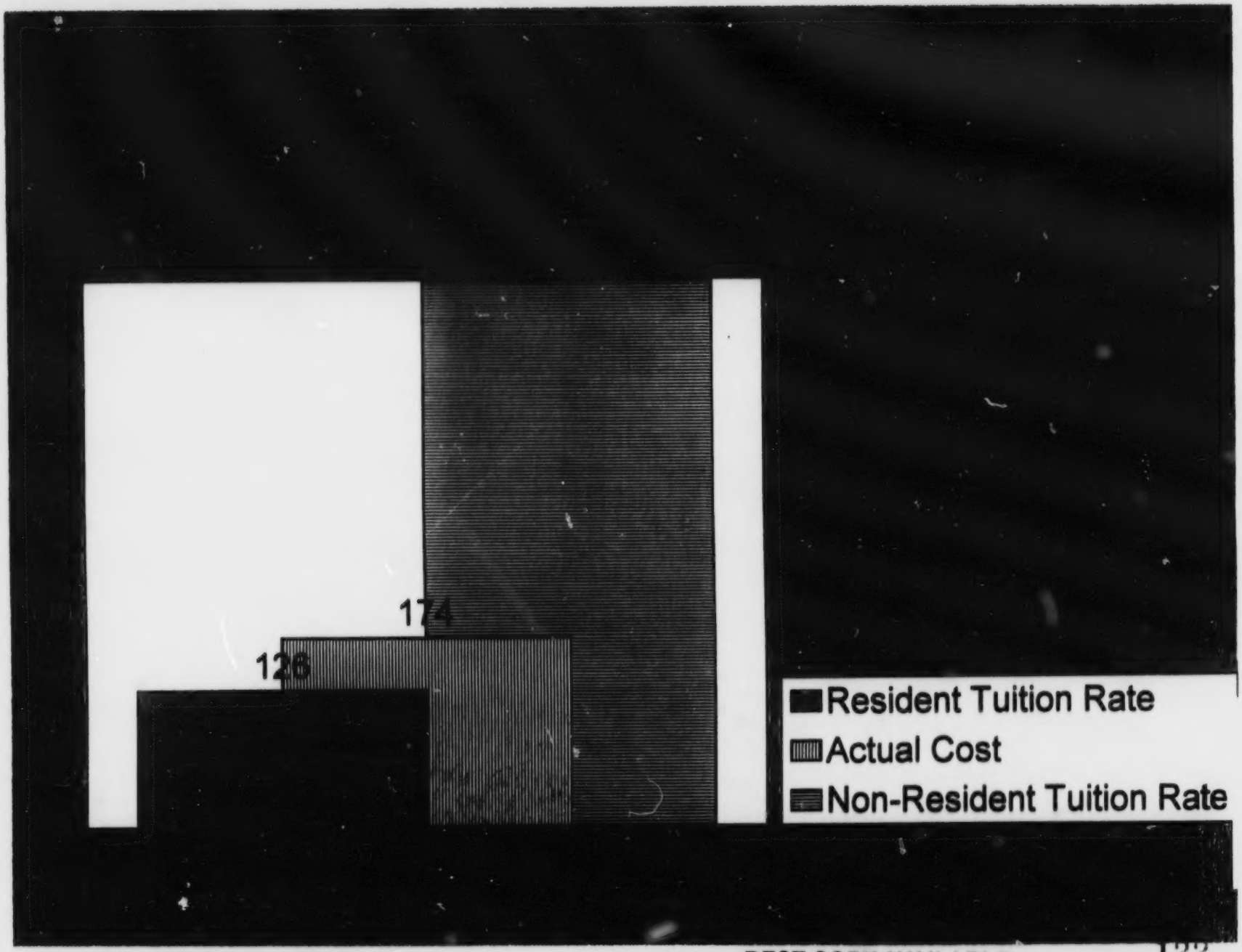

Figure 9

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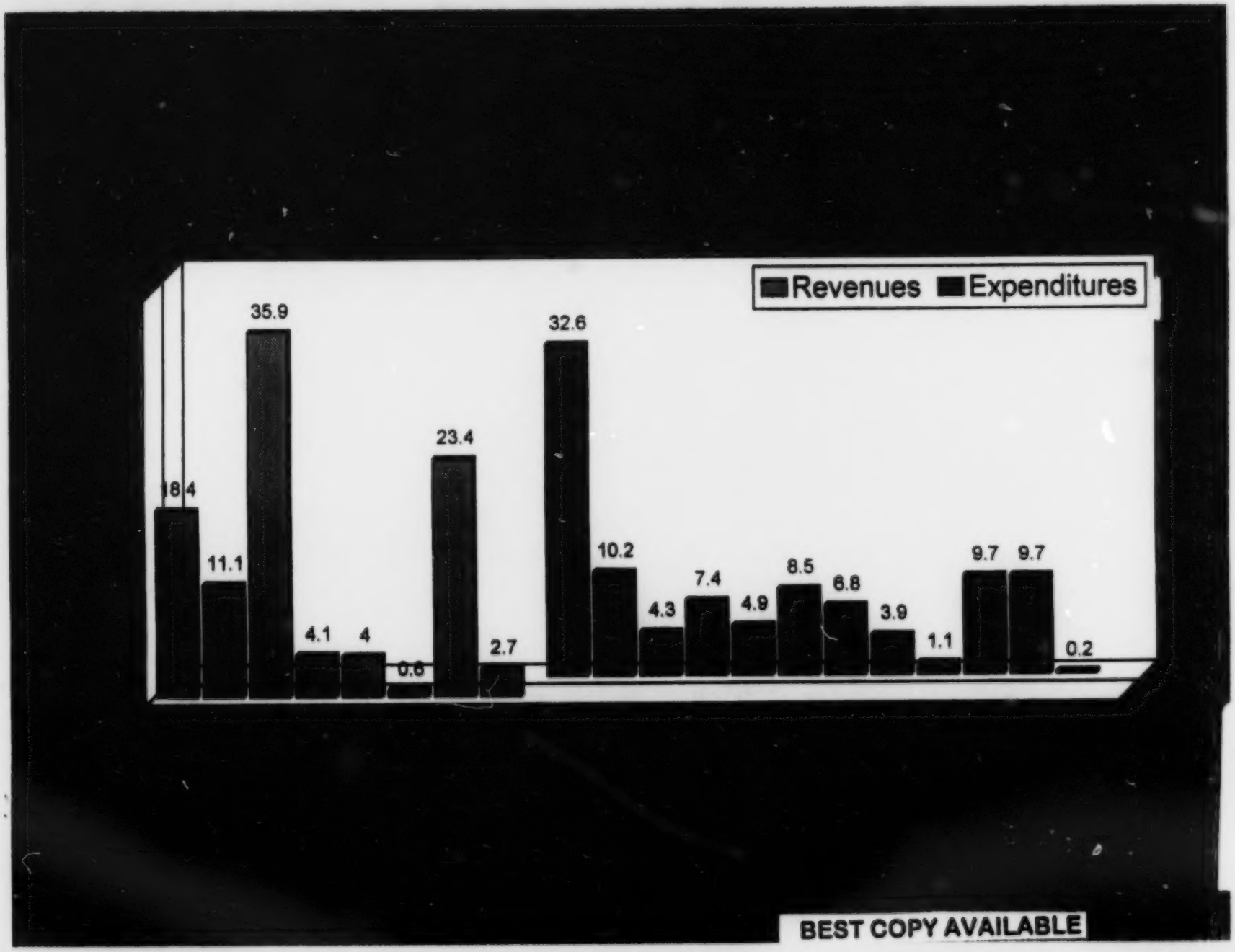

Figure 10

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THE ERIC Review

A Paradigm Shift in Staff Development

by Dennis Sparks

During the past 20 years, it has gone by many names—inservice education, staff development, professional development, and human resource development. But whatever it was called, it too often was essentially the same thing—educators (usually teachers) sitting relatively passively while an "expert" "exposed" them to new ideas or "trained" them in new practices. The success of this endeavor was typically judged by a "happiness quotient" that measured participants' satisfaction with the experience and their assessment regarding its usefulness in their work.

Fortunately, all of this is at long last being swept away by irresistible forces that are currently at work in education. History teaches us the power of a transforming idea, an alteration in world view so profound that all that follows is changed forever. Such a paradigm shift is now rapidly transforming the discipline of "staff development." (I will use this term throughout because our professional language has not yet caught up with the paradigm shift that is described below.)

Three Powerful Ideas

Three powerful ideas are currently altering the shape of this nation's schools and the staff development that occurs within them.

■ **Results-driven education**. Results-driven education judges success not by the courses students take or the grades they receive, but by what they actually know and can do as a result of their time in school. Results-driven education for students will require that teachers and administrators alter their attitudes (e.g., from the idea that grades should be based on the bell curve to the belief that virtually all students can acquire the school's valued outcomes provided they are given sufficient time and appropriate instruction) and acquire new instructional knowledge and skills.

Results-driven education for students will require results-driven staff development for educators. Staff development's success will be judged primarily not by how many teachers and administrators participate in staff development or how they perceive its value, but by whether it alters instructional behavior in a way that benefits students. The goal of staff development and other improvement efforts is becoming improved performance on the part of students, staff, and the organization.

■ **Systems thinking**. This second transforming idea recognizes the complex, interdependent relationships among the various parts of the system. When the parts of a system come together, they form something that is bigger and more complex than those individual parts. Systems thinkers are individuals who are able to see how these parts constantly influence one another in ways that can support or hinder improvement efforts. Because educational leaders typically have not thought systemically, reform has been approached in a piecemeal fashion.

An important aspect of systems thinking is that changes in one part of the system—even relatively minor changes—can have significant effects on other parts of the system, either positively or negatively. To complicate the situation, these effects may not become obvious for months or even years, which may lead observers to miss the link between the two events.

For instance, graduation requirements may be increased, teachers may be trained in some new process, or decision making may be decentralized, with little thought given to how these changes influence other parts of the system. As a result, "improvements" in one area may produce unintended consequences in another part of the system (e.g., increasing graduation requirements in science without making appropriate changes in assessment, curriculum, and instructional methods may increase the dropout rate).

To address this issue, Peter Senge, author of *The Fifth Discipline* (1990), encourages organizational leaders to identify points of high leverage in the system—points that he refers to as "trim tabs." Change introduced into

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these areas can have a positive ripple effect throughout the organization (e.g., a change in assessment strategies may have a significant effect on curriculum and instruction).

■ **Constructivism**. Constructivists believe that learners build knowledge structures rather than merely receive them from teachers. In this view, knowledge is not simply transmitted from teacher to student, but is instead constructed in the mind of the learner. From a constructivist perspective, it is critical that teachers model appropriate behavior, guide student activities, and provide various forms of examples rather than use common instructional practices that emphasize telling and directing.

Constructivist teaching will be best learned through constructivist staff development. Rather than receiving "knowledge" from "experts" in training sessions, teachers and administrators will collaborate with peers, researchers, and their own students to make sense of the teaching/learning process in their own contexts. Staff development from a constructivist perspective will include activities that many educators may not even view as staff development, such as action research, conversations with peers about the beliefs and assumptions that guide their instruction, and reflective practices (e.g., journal keeping).

Changes in Staff Development

Results-driven education, systems thinking, and constructivism are producing profound changes in how staff development is conceived and implemented. Some of the most important of these changes are:

■ **From individual development to individual development *and* organizational development.** Too often we have expected dramatic changes in schools based solely on staff development programs intended to help individual teachers and administrators do their jobs more effectively. An important lesson from the past few years, however, has been that improvements in individual performance alone are insufficient to produce the results we desire.

It is now clear that success for all students depends upon both the learning of individual school employees and improvements in the capacity of the organization to solve problems and renew itself. While the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of individuals must continually be addressed, quality improvement expert W. Edwards Deming estimates that 85 percent of the barriers to improvement reside in the organization's structure and processes, not in the performance of individuals.

For instance, asking teachers to hold higher expectations for students within a school that tracks students pits teachers against the system in which they work. As systems thinking has taught us, unless individual learning and organizational changes are addressed simultaneously and support one another, the gains made in one area may be canceled by continuing problems in the other.

■ **From fragmented, piecemeal improvement efforts to staff development driven by a clear, coherent strategic plan for the school district, each school, and the departments that serve schools.** Educational experts such as Seymour Sarason (1990) and Michael Fullan (1991) have criticized schools for their fragmented approach to change. School improvement too often has been based on fad rather than on a clear, compelling vision of the school system's future. This, in turn, has led to one-shot staff development workshops with no thought given to follow-up or to how the new technique fits in with those that were taught in previous years. In the worst case, teachers are asked to implement poorly understood innovations with little support and assistance, and before they are able to approach mastery, the school has moved on to another area.

An orientation to outcomes and systems thinking has led to strategic planning at the district, school, and department levels. Clear, compelling mission statements and measurable objectives expressed in terms of student outcomes give guidance to the type of staff development activities that would best serve district and school goals. In turn, district offices such as staff development and curriculum see themselves as service agencies for schools. This comprehensive approach to change makes certain that all aspects of the system (e.g., assessment, curriculum, instruction, parent involvement) are working in tandem toward a manageable set of outcomes that are valued throughout the system.

■ **From district-focused to school-focused approaches to staff development.** While districtwide awareness and skill-building programs sometimes have their place, more attention today is being directed to helping schools meet their improvement goals. Schools set their goals both to assist the school system in achieving its long-term objectives and to address challenges unique to their students' needs.

School improvement efforts in which the entire staff seeks incremental annual improvement related to a set of common objectives (e.g., helping all students become better problem solvers, increasing the number of students who participate in a voluntary community service program to 100 percent) over a 3- to 5-year span are viewed as the key to significant reform. As a result, more learning activities are designed and implemented by school faculties, with the district's staff development department providing technical assistance and functioning as a service center to support the work of the schools.

■ **From a focus on adult needs to a focus on student needs and learning outcomes**. Rather than basing staff development solely upon the perceptions of educators regarding what they need (e.g., to learn about classroom management), staff development planning processes are more often beginning by determining the things students need to know and be able to do and working backward to the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required of educators if those student outcomes are to be realized. This shift does not negate the value of teachers' perceptions regarding their needs, but rather places those needs within a larger context.

■ **From training that one attends away from the job as the primary delivery system for staff development**

to multiple forms of job-embedded learning. Critics have long argued that too much of what passes as staff development is "sit and get" in which educators are passive recipients of received wisdom. Likewise, a great deal of staff development could be thought of as "go and get" because "learning" has typically meant leaving the job to attend a workshop or other event.

While well-designed training programs followed by coaching will continue to be the preferred method for developing certain skills, school employees will also learn through such diverse means as conducting action research, participating in study groups or small-group problem solving, observing peers, keeping journals, and becoming involved in improvement processes (e.g., participating in curriculum development or school improvement planning).

■ **From an orientation toward the transmission of knowledge and skills to teachers by "experts" to the study by teachers of the teaching and learning processes.** Teachers will spend an increasingly larger portion of their work day in various processes that assist them in continually improving their understanding of the teaching and learning process. Action research, study groups, and the joint planning of lessons, among other processes, will be regularly used by teachers to refine their instructional knowledge and skills.

■ **From a focus on generic instructional skills to a combination of generic and content-specific skills.** While staff development related to cooperative learning, mastery learning, and mastery teaching, among other topics, will continue to have its place, more staff development of various forms will focus on specific content areas such as mathematics, science, language arts, and social studies. Recent studies have revealed the importance of teachers possessing a deeper understanding of both their academic disciplines and of specific pedagogical approaches tailored to those areas.

■ **From staff developers who function primarily as trainers to those who provide consultation, planning, and facilitation services, as well as training.** Staff developers are more frequently called on today to facilitate meetings or to assist various work groups (e.g., a school faculty, the superintendent's cabinet, a school improvement team) solve problems or develop long-range plans. While staff developers will continue to provide training in instructional areas, results-driven education and systems thinking have placed teachers, administrators, and school employees in new roles (e.g., team leader, strategic planning team member) for which training in areas such as conducting effective meetings will be required for successful performance.

■ **From staff development provided by one or two departments to staff development as a critical function and major responsibility performed by all administrators and teacher leaders.** Job-embedded staff development means that superintendents, assistant superintendents, curriculum supervisors, principals, and teacher leaders, among others, must see themselves as teachers of adults and view the development of others as one of their most important responsibilities. Individuals who perform these roles are increasingly being held accountable for their performance as planners and implementers of various forms of staff development.

As responsibility for staff development has been spread throughout the school system, the role of the staff development department has become even more important. Staff development departments are assisting teachers and administrators by offering training and ongoing support in acquiring the knowledge and skills necessary to assume new responsibilities. Staff developers, among their other responsibilities, provide one-to-one coaching of these individuals in their new roles and facilitate meetings that are best led by individuals who are outside of a particular group.

■ **From teachers as the primary recipients of staff development to continuous improvement in performance for everyone who affects student learning.** To meet the educational challenges of the 21st century, everyone who affects student learning must continually upgrade his or her skills—school board trustees, superintendents and other central office administrators, principals, teachers, the various categories of support staff (e.g., aides, secretaries, bus drivers, custodians), and parents and community members who serve on policy-making boards and planning committees.

■ **From staff development as a "frill" that can be cut during difficult financial times to staff development as an essential and indispensable process without which schools cannot hope to prepare young people for citizenship and productive employment.** Both the development of school employees and significant changes in the organizations in which they work are required if schools are to adequately prepare students for life in a world that is becoming increasingly more complex. Fortunately, results-driven education and systems thinking provide us with the intellectual understanding and the means to create the necessary reforms.

The shifts described in this article are significant and powerful. They are essential to the creation of learning communities in which all members—students, teachers, principals, and support staff—are both learners and teachers. All of the things described above will serve to unleash the most powerful source of success for all students—the daily presence of adults who are passionately committed to their own lifelong learning within organizations that are continually renewing themselves.

References

Fullan, M. 1991. *The New Meaning of Educational Change*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Sarason, S. 1990. *The Predictable Failure of Educational Reform*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Senge, P. 1990. *The Fifth Discipline*. New York: Doubleday.

NASDSE Project FORUM

Preparing Educators to Work With Students
Who are Blind or Visually Impaired

CSPD

- Needs Assessment: Utilize a stakeholders advisory committee -- IHEs are a major participant; data gathered from Regional Education Service Agencies (RESAs)
- Numerous special education teacher training programs -- none have VI or O&M
- In-Service delivered through a variety of statewide meetings and staff development activities
- Utilize out of state program to provide preservice training
- No WV endorsement

State Law

- Requires all educators to have a minimum of 3 staff development days/year per school calendar
- Eighteen (18) hours continuing education credits required each year

Preservice

- VI-D 84.029 Personnel Preparation Grant
- Contract with University of Alabama (previously contract with Peabody College of Vanderbelt University) at WVSDB Campus
- Use State and Federal Discretionary Dollars
- Numerous Task Forces with Higher Education
- Experimental VI Program with University of Michigan
- Possible Program at Marshall University -- Teubert Foundation

Professional Development

- Fall Conference at WV Schools for the Deaf and Blind (every other year)
- VI Topical Conferences sponsored by WVDE and Deaf-Blind Project
- INSIGHT Early Intervention Training/Outreach Services from WVSDB
- PATHS Annual Assistive Technology Conferences -- VI Focus at each one
- Tadpole Early Intervention/Preschool Training Calendar
- Training by RESAs
- Mid-South Regional Resource Center Distance Learning Efforts
- Braille Specialists' Training Activities
- Satellite Training via 4 studios and WV Library Commission

Technical Assistance

- RESA VI program in visual impairments
- Office of Special Education Staff
- Instructional Resource Center(IRC) at WVSDB
- WVSDB Outreach Services
- Toll Free Parent Action Line

- Parent-Educator Resource Centers (PERCs)
- West Virginia Education Information System (WVEIS) Statewide Computer System
- RESA VII Technology Center
- Regular Dissemination of Research and Best Practices

Resources

- Best Practices Document
- Deaf-Blind Project Library
- Schools, County and State Strategic Planning -- required by state legislation
- Instructional Resource Center (IRC) at WVSDB

Funding

- VI-D Personnel Preparation Grant
- State and Federal Discretionary Dollars
- Teubert Private Foundation
- Benedum Foundation

Influencing Issues

- Orientation and Mobility Task Force
- Rural Nature of State
- Critical Shortage Area
- Accessibility of course work
- Outward migration from special education to regular education
- Early retirement/aging out within 5 years
- Relocation to other states
- Salary differentiation between school districts
- Increased need in public schools
- Small number of students/great needs
- Burnout
- Need for peers for teachers

Michael A. Valentine, Ph.D.
West Virginia Department of Education

APPENDIX D

Policy Forum Agenda

Agenda
Training Educators to Work with Students
Who are Blind or Visually Impaired: A Policy Forum

Grand Hyatt Hotel in Washington, DC
September 18-20, 1996

Wednesday, September 18

6:00 p.m.	Dinner [Latrobe Room - Level 3B]	
6:45	Welcome	
		Eileen Ahearn, Project FORUM *Lou Danielson, OSEP*
7:00	Goals of the Policy Forum	
		Joy Markowitz
7:15	Self introductions and participant perspective on topic	
		All Participants
8:00	Agenda review & meeting logistics	
		Joy Markowitz

Thursday, September 19

7:30 a.m.	Buffet breakfast [Latrobe Room - Level 3B]	
8:00	Preservice training - "The state of the art"	
		Anne Corn, Kay Ferrell and George Zimmerman
8:15	Essential components and structural elements of a good preservice training program	
9:30	Small group assignments	
9:35	Break	

9:45	Small group discussions - Addressing preservice training needs
	Orange group - state and local roles [Latrobe Room] Green group - federal and IHE roles [Renwick Room]
10:45	Re-convene for reports from small groups
11:30	Inservice training - "The state of the art"
	Pat Gonzalez - Literature review *Mike Valentine - CSPD requirements and how WV addresses them* *Mike Bina - State schools for the blind*
12:00	Lunch [Grand Cafe - Level 1B]
1:15	Strategies for addressing inservice training needs
2:00	Small group discussions - Addressing inservice training needs
	Orange group - state and local roles [Latrobe Room] Green group - federal and IHE roles [Renwick Room]
3:00	Break
3:15	Re-convene for reports from small groups
4:00	Summary of day's accomplishments /Adjournment for day

Friday, September 20

8:30 a.m.	Buffet breakfast [Arlington Room - Level 3B]
9:00	Addressing personnel shortages at the preservice and inservice level
10:30	Action plan
11:30	Adjournment